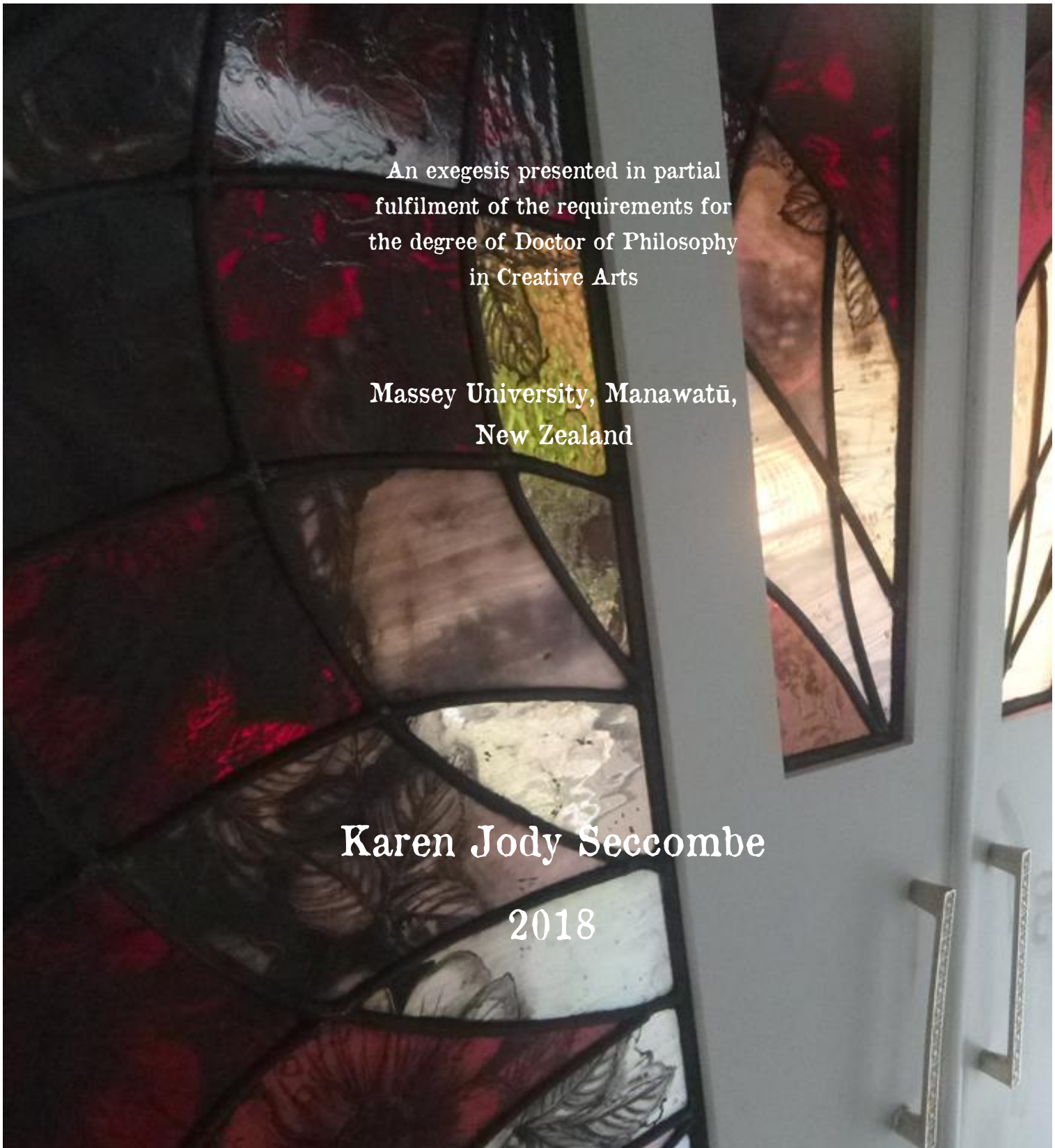
the clarity of light

Self-representation through art making - a personal response to the social justice work of WAI the Women's Art Initiative Collective



An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Arts

Massey University, Manawatū, New Zealand

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2018

Abstract

Through the medium of art a very different way of thinking about, representing, and responding to women who have experienced violence has been constructed. The Women's Art Initiative (WAI) collective approach to art making within an insider community offers a powerful, authentic, self-directed alternative to more commonly applied art therapy approaches. It challenges many deeply entrenched deficit and pathologising stereotypes which are used to represent women who are considered too broken or unsafe to speak for themselves. This research shares the WAI way of thinking and an applied approach that are anchored in years of reflective practice, many conversations, and a rich diversity of membership. It clearly reveals the profound, socially engaged, and unique responses women can construct when they are respected, heard, and offered autonomy within an insider directed art making setting. The WAI Spirographic model of practice, a personal body of stained glass art work, and the collaborative fabric works developed demonstrate a personal response to the research findings.

Sharing such precious and privileged knowledge within the space of a research environment may hold dangerous potential for misunderstanding and further exposure of those who have already suffered the overwhelmingly negative responses that others often make to them. It is, however, the best chance that we have, as those who know violence intimately, to create change, and to have our perspectives and knowledge recognised and legitimated.

Dedication and acknowledgments

I have walked amongst a community throughout this research project. Without every one of these people WAI the Women's Art Initiative would not exist or continue to thrive, and I would not have the privilege of sharing my understanding of these precious knowledges.

I honour the contribution of the women of WAI to this research. The knowledge, wisdom, and strength that every one of our WAI collective members has brought to our shared kaupapa, has enhanced and informed this research, and significantly altered my own reflections, thinking, and approach to making art.

It has been a privilege to conduct this research within the protective space of Te Pūtahi-a-Toi, School of Māori Art, Knowledge and Education at Massey University in Palmerston North. The generous sharing of understanding and knowledge, and the care offered to me by the academic staff has guided and supported this project and offered the WAI collective dignity, allowing us a safe space to find our own way. I acknowledge the patience, sensitivity, trust, excellent advice, and respectful guidance of my supervisors Prof. Robert Jahnke and Dr. Margaret Forster. The mentoring they have both so generously offered has altered my own thinking and self-representation, and has enhanced the WAI model of practice. The integrity of the WAI approach continues to be grounded in many profound and thoughtful discussions which took place in 2012 with Associate Professor Ngataiharuru Taepa and Lecturer Rongomaiaia Te Whaiti.

An enormous debt of gratitude is owed to the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, in particular to the Managers and advocates of Palmerston North Women's Refuge, Te Whare Rokiroki Māori Women's Refuge, Wellington Women's Refuge, and Marlborough

Women's Refuge and Sexual Abuse Centre. The model that the refuge movement in this country offers is robust, empowering and upholds the dignity of the women they support. The belief and real-life knowledge that these amazing women have offered to the WAI kaupapa has kept me going. The work that is done every day all over this country by Women's Refuge New Zealand is pivotal in the fight for better social responses to women who have experienced violence.

Many people have also supported the practical and messy personal art making side of this project. Without their enthusiasm, advice, and problem solving abilities I would not have had the courage to tackle such a formidable body of work. A special acknowledgment must be made of the women who worked alongside me to create collaborative fabric works - all are busy women with many commitments. The time and love that was given to these works and to developing our shared understandings has humbled me.Huge thanks to Greg Hall, Kate Dobbs, David Traub; Paul at Nightowl, and my Kimbolton neighbours, Terry, Ralph, Eddie and Peter. It has been an enormous privilege working with so many creative and inspiring people throughout this project.

Without the very generous financial support of a Massey University Vice Chancellors' Scholarship, a 2015 Freemasons Post graduate Scholarship, a 2016 Claude McCarthy Fellowship and a 2016 Janus NGO research award, this research would not have been possible. I have also truly appreciated the support of a 2017 Earle Creativity and Development Trust award, and support for exhibition from the Palmerston North City Council Creative Communities Scheme. I am very grateful to have received such formidable support.

Finally, and most importantly, I extend my deepest appreciation to my beautiful family – my partner Ang, my parents, my three children, and my grandchildren. The belief you all have in me has allowed me to walk this difficult and personally demanding research path with dignity and courage. You are my touchstones, my heart, and my strongest motivation to see social change.

Prologue

Once there was a young girl who loved climbing trees and watching sunsets, who read voraciously, and dreamed. She liked to paint, draw, write, and make things. She had a wonderful imagination. She wanted to grow up and be a woman but she was scared. One day the girl met a man who was strong and confident and told her what she needed to do to make her way in the world. He promised to make her life easy and to take care of all of the hard stuff for her. She would have an amazing, lovely, life if she would follow him. So she did.

She followed him into a dark slow death.

She followed him to a place where she became lost and invisible, alone and isolated, she became powerless and he became a monster. She lost her voice, her ability to feel, her ability to function and her sense of who she was. She felt very, very sad. The darkness enveloped and engulfed her. She resisted it with the only tools she had – her mind, her heart, and her hands. When everything became ugly she stenciled roses on the walls. When she lost touch with herself she touched the earth or held her children. When she was suffocating she inhaled literature and poetry, and took shallow breaths of creativity.

Her light became dim.

She was confused and ashamed, and she blamed herself for her pain. When she finally could she ran away fast and she never went back. That was not the end of this story, it was really the beginning.

Afterwards the girl tried to understand what had happened. She was different and her world saw her as damaged, broken, undignified, and deficient. Her story was not allowed to be told, because darkness can't be seen in the daylight. It made people uncomfortable. The girl needed to get on with living in the daylight and put the darkness behind her, she was told.

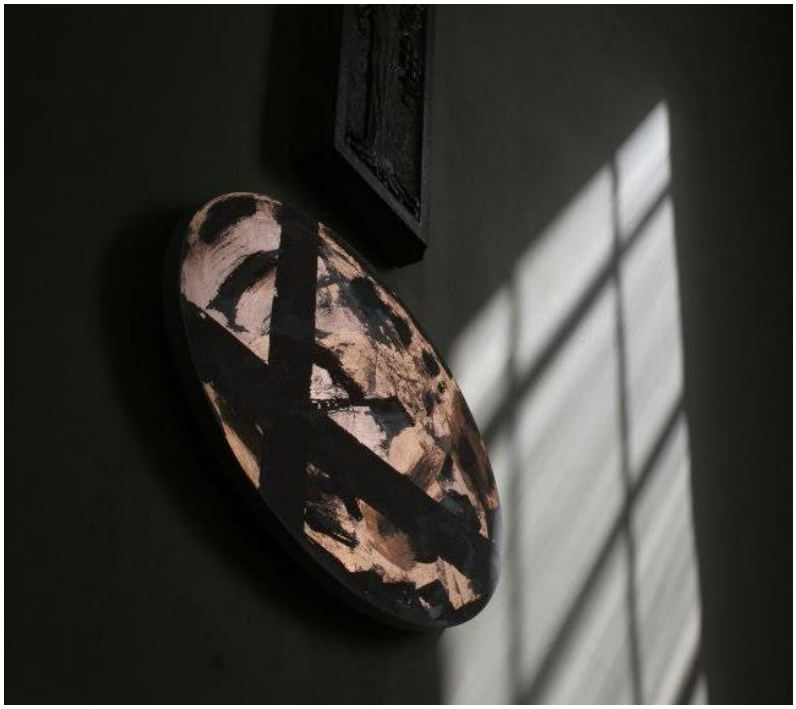
She did her best but the darkness kept following her. She wanted to understand herself but the self she now saw was not the self she knew nor remembered. So she went back to what she knew – she read voraciously, she made art, baked, gardened, studied, and grew beautiful children, and somewhere along the way her darkness started to leak out and into her world. The shadows of her pain did not hide anymore and she started to see them everywhere. Other people's shadows, the shadows of this place she called home.

The darkness began to exist alongside the light in a way that made her want to point it out to anyone who would listen, but she had no words to speak of it.

It came out in her artwork – what she wanted to say, her truth, her pain, and her difference, the darkness of a world that condoned such pain, which committed such pain. Her voice started to come back, but not in words. She put her story in a place where others could see it. It made her vulnerable and really scared but in giving up her secrets her power was manifest.

Throughout her passage of darkness she suddenly recognised her inherent, undiminished light. When she looked in the mirror she did not see a passive, weak girl but a fierce woman she knew and understood.

That woman walked the long path to this report.



All images above: McIntyre, K. (2012). *Passage Series.* [Acrylic on board].

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

"when we dare to speak in a liberatory voice, we threaten even those who may initially claim to want our words"

(hooks 1989 p.18)

This research addresses the perceived symbiotic and therapeutic relationship between art and women who have experienced violence, offering an alternative set of insider understandings which challenge and resist common deficit and therapy informed responses. When the word art sits alongside the words violence, 'victim', or 'survivor' some very specific connections are often made. Overwhelmingly the inference is that the art making process and its outcomes will be therapeutic - used to analyse and fix the perceived deficits of the 'client' being 'helped'. A plethora of art therapy research backs these common ways of working. This dissertation aims to present a comprehensive picture of a very different art and philosophical approach to walking alongside victims of violence. It is an approach that privileges the voices of those who know and understand violence, and publicly expresses these through the exhibition of the artistic responses made within a supportive collective environment.

A prologue leads into the writing, offering the motivation and deeply intimate context for this Creative Arts research - the outcomes of which are the written dissertation and a personal and collaborative body of artworks. The prologue begins with a private narrative, included as a critical element to ground the kaupapa (the philosophy, subject, theme or issue) and explicitly identify the insider position of the researcher.

Chapter One sets the scene, establishing the social and cultural context within which this work is undertaken. Through an examination of the history of violence within Aotearoa New

Zealand it identifies an ongoing and legitimated history of violence against those considered 'other'.

Chapter Two explicates the chosen research methodology and method. The carefully constructed qualitative stance outlined attempts to identify inequitable power relations, and addresses oppressive mainstream research practices which this researcher argues create an inevitable, but avoidable impact on the integrity and honesty of the information gathering process and the analysis of the findings.

Chapter Three summarises the 2013 Women's Art Initiative (WAI) model of practice developed through the researcher's Masters of Maori Visual Arts research. This previous work aimed to offer dignifying ways of providing women the opportunity to self-represent their experiences of violence. The chapter then goes on to outline the questions and aims of this project, concluding with a discussion of the many complex ethical implications of this research.

The philosophical approach which underpins the WAI way of working and thinking and our approach to art-making and exhibition are underlined in Chapter Four. Part One opens a space around the representation of women and violence through art and literature, and develops a rationale for self-representation. Part Two encompasses the key beliefs and philosophies that underpin our collective approach to art-making. These include: Response Based Practice, resistance to violence, upholding dignity, the WAI concept of 'being', an active engagement in art making, collectivism, and insider facilitation. Our understandings of these concepts and the particular and specific ways in which we use terminology, are addressed.

Chapter Five describes the WAI Spirographic model of practice developed through the research process, unpacking the many flexible, layered, shifting and very real

understandings that inform the current representation of this. This model of practice encompasses the WAI Palmerston North (PN) collective's core beliefs and our kawa, or ways of doing things, and the different pragmatic approaches we have taken to implementing this 'model'. It offers a snapshot of our 'walk' as an art making collective, and records our social justice approach, which challenges many of the contemporary discourses surrounding violence against women in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A reflective discussion on the WAI data collected and the research findings is presented within Chapter Six. These findings directly inform the personal art making practice described in Chapter Seven. An overview of the originally intended research process, which was to take place alongside three other regional Women's Refuges, is included. WAI PN's art making process, outcomes, themes, symbols and approaches are analysed, using the ongoing written reflections made over the research period. Collective members written reflections are included within this section, as is a discussion of the public responses to our work, and an analysis of our WAI art as activism.

Chapter seven translates the research into a personal and collaborative art making practice, unpacking the elements, symbols, materials and concepts through which the binaries implicit in contemporary discourse are represented within the exhibition *the clarity of light*. This chapter discusses my responses to the WAI research through my art making. I respond to the WAI ways of self-representing identity, of flipping deficits and challenging the binaries inherent in the discourses of violence. Through the presented installation, which is made up of stained glass, altered wardrobes, and collaborative fabric works, I share my artistic reflections on our collectives' way of working and thinking. All that I have learned through the research informs this visual narrative.

The final substantive section of this dissertation, the conclusion, gathers together the various threads of the research, providing the reader with an outline discussion of the overall project. This is followed by a poem in the form of an epilogue. Summarising a sense

of hope, this epilogue offers a challenge to entrenched and unhelpful ways of responding to 'victims of violence'. It asks readers to carry forward the precious, alternative knowledge which is identified through this research project

Chapter 1 Nga Mōrehu - The Survivors

"Stones have light

Grief has great light"

John Pule, (1993,p.9)

Colonisation

Stones are heavy. It is a fact that Western culture acknowledges with colloquialisms such as 'carrying a millstone around your neck' or 'weighing like a stone upon your conscience'. Grief is also often described as weighing heavily upon us, acting as a burden to us, or as a dark shadow hanging over us. It makes sense to me that John Pule links stones, these weighted objects, with a topic such as grief, which sits heavily on our consciousness. What is harder to grasp is the connection he makes between this and light. Even the word is a contradiction – light is the binary opposition of heavy, lightness opposes darkness. Lightness refers to clarity, darkness to confusion. If we are enlightened we have a sense of knowledge or understanding. How can stones have light? How can grief have 'great light'? Colonisation is a process which has brought great grief or sadness to many indigenous people across the world. How can light emit from the stones that sit within this space?

This space, a place I call home, is, Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a space that breathes a history of conflict, death, pain, loss, trauma, resistance, and dignity. Acknowledging this colonised space and these heavy stones within the context of my kaupapa is necessary. Richardson and Reynolds in relation to their own work express this grounding exceptionally well, stating that "we never forget where we are standing. We always start our work from this place, with our feet solidly positioned on the land in which we live, land that was never

surrendered" (2012, p. 3). Aotearoa has been the site of oppression for many people. It is the context I live my life within, and therefore this report, this body of knowledge, is sited within it also. Understanding the histories that inform this context is crucial to my position as a Pākehā (European) woman and researcher.

Western history in this country began with the British 'discovery' of Aotearoa New Zealand, in 1769. The subsequent migration of British citizens in the nineteenth century commenced a long battle to stamp imperial order and the ideal of the British Empire on the isolated place in which these settlers found themselves. British efforts to colonise Aotearoa New Zealand, and its people were assisted by perspectives that Māori, the indigenous inhabitants, were an inferior; separate, or 'other' form of life, in need of domination and guidance (Adams, 2012; Belich, 1986; Orange, 1992; Kawharu, 1989; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This 'commonsense and rational' approach to the domination and management of the 'natives', was strongly supported by the scientific perspectives of the Enlightenment, rooted in the assumed understandings and beliefs of white patriarchal order, which allowed a sustained imposition of colonial ideals over indigenous life (Swainson, 1859, Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). A sense of natural entitlement and superiority, partnered with an absolute belief in Imperial order, justified control at any expense, and violence was viewed as a socially acceptable method of subduing the 'natives'.

Brutal measures imposed during the New Zealand Land wars, unfair incarceration, and armed invasions of peaceful communities were visible signs of the violent undercurrent which unjustly confiscated Māori land, isolated individuals and destabilised customary ways of living through exclusion, execution, and marginalisation, all in the name of colonisation. The loss of rights to land, to fishing and food gathering were reflective of a wider loss of autonomy for Māori people. Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi, Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document, offered scant protection to Māori rights as the reluctance of successive governments to accede to Māori demands was based in the fear of being seen to negate the ideological goal of integration (Belich, 1998; Orange, 1992).

The initial response of Māori to this colonisation process was cooperative, requiring suppression of the characteristics which accentuated difference, thus permitting a superficial 'integration' into Pākehā (European) society. However, this powerful silencing of all things Māori came at an enormous cost to customary ways of living, to identity, to the transmission of knowledge, and to Te Reo Māori, the Māori language. Dissolved in neutrality and philanthropy, and inherent in introduced western institutions such as the church and the school, were unwritten codes and laws which perpetrated this implicit, naturalised violence (Adams, 2012). Farrelly, Rudegair, and Rickard (2005) note that "Assimilation policies and theories of cultural deprivation gave rise to negative stereotyping of Māori" (p. 208) to deficit approaches, further discrimination, and a greater sense of cultural separation. The diminishment and marginalisation of Māori men's power in this new western society manifested itself increasingly as violence in the home (Pitman, 2012), reinforcing these deficit social discourses and contributing to attributions of poor parenting, poor health, social vulnerability, and state dependence (George, 2012; Pool, 2015). The professionalisation and regulation of knowledge and skills in the social services sector further denigrated Māori knowledge, tikanga (protocols or customs), and approaches to wellbeing (rongoā Māori), building on a body of research that gave privilege and power to outsiders, and which did not acknowledge cultural marginalisation and oppression (Belgrave, 2014; Woodard, 2014).

The 1960s began a time of social critique and activism, which saw a new decolonising perspective on the accepted discourse of progress in Aotearoa New Zealand. Johnson (2008) notes the change in language at this time from the idea of 'one' Aotearoa New Zealand to an acknowledgment of the dual histories of this country inherent in the term biculturalism. The Waitangi tribunal was set up in 1975 to address Māori grievances against the Crown, and in 1985 the Tribunal was given permission by the then Labour government to hear historical claims, some of which have now been defined as 'settled' (Belich, 1988; Orange, 1992; Kawharu, 1989). Gradually the 1980s emphasis on Māori as an homogenous group with a universal narrative of colonisation began to be shifted to locate multiple

perspectives and the diversity of specific knowledge in different iwi, hapū and whānau experiences (Belgrave, 2014; Durie, 1995; George, 2012).

While awareness and social activism have promoted change, the ongoing nature of cultural colonisation through the accepted notion of a general history, seen to reflect the historical experience of all people in this country, continues. The one-sided evidence and interpretation of Aotearoa's colonial history has both camouflaged and preserved the dominant groups' ideology, and distorted and interrupted the balance of Māori understandings and access to knowledge within Te Ao Māori - the Māori world view. Skepticism of Māori oral histories in the 1950s ensured two separate forms of recorded history for many decades (Belgrave, 2014; Belich, 1986; Pihama, Reynolds, Smith, Reid, Smith, L. & Te Nana, 2014).

Despite change, the colonial, patriarchal attitudes which permitted the naming and claiming of indigenous lands and attempted complete assimilation or erasure of Māori and their customary ways of living continue to persist. Understandings of continuing, new, forms of colonisation yet to be articulated and resisted must therefore continue to be explored (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, Pitman, 2012). The process of colonisation was one that sought to violate every part of who Māori were and are, and it continues to impact on Māori identity and wellbeing, "it is an invasion of the mind, of the body, of the soul and the spirit, and it spreads itself across generations" (Pitman, 2012, p.46).

Greater public recognition of cultural trauma in the history of Aotearoa has resulted in a formal apology from the government and attempts to increase bi-cultural awareness and Māori participation in social decision making. Within this context Māori have developed kohanga reo (Māori language nests), Kura Kaupapa (schools), and pressured for the implementation of Māori immersion classes within mainstream Pākehā education systems, with a strong emphasis on the fundamental importance of their own cultural learning. Farrelly, Rudegair and Rickard (2005) believe the intergenerational cultural trauma; grief,

suffering and deep seated sadness, or whakamomori, of colonisation, continues to impact on Māori health and wellbeing, but comment that while Māori were dominated they were not destroyed, they were "traumatised but not obliterated" (p.218) and have ultimately begun to publicly reassert their cultural values.

Colonialist structures may not always be overt or self-evident within images but images are prime sites for the articulation of such ideologies. The patriarchal context of colonial violence in Aotearoa enforced the ongoing marginalisation and mistreatment of those considered 'other', and this group included women. The representation of women through images has supported and reinforced these colonial systems of oppression, and allowed violence against women to thrive.

For Māori women this interpersonal gender-based violence is compounded by cultural violence, by colonial marginalisation, and the modification, and re-definition of their female roles and responsibilities within a Pākehā society. This shift created a different, separate space, for Māori women and children, one which Māori men were expected to contain. Colonisation for Māori women offered some vast differences in experience and impact when compared to that of their men (Pitman, 2012). The native schooling system's ideological goals of civilising and christianising Māori, diminished the status of Māori women, and promoted patriarchal discourses of domestication and subservience to men, socialising women (who often had leadership and authority within their culture) appropriately into their 'natural' western societal roles (Pihama, Reynolds, Smith et al, 2014; Mikaere, 1995). These introduced gender role-norms, which subjugated women, and raised men to dominating positions of power and authority, impacted on traditional intimate partner relationships which were previously far more equitably balanced (Dobbs and Eruera, 2014). Violence against women and children was viewed as very serious, and was responded to by the community, as a community (not a private) concern. Prior to colonisation, this absence of distinction between private and public within Māori communities offered women affirmation of their roles and protected them (Mikaere, 1995).

Although it was rare to see contemporary images of naked Western women in 1908, Louis Steele, a classically trained European painter, starkly depicts a bare-breasted Māori woman tied to the palings of an unsuccessfully defended village in his painting *Spoils to the Victor* [figure 1]. Lying beside her is a Māori man who presumably lost his life in the defense of the woman and their home. Weapons which symbolise her wealth and the colonial conquest over her family and land lay about her. Represented as an object of exotic desire, bound and at the mercy of her captor, the image gratifies the male spectator and clearly demonstrates a sense of white male power. At the time Steel painted this work, images of bound women, were viewed as risqué and socially unpleasant but Bell (1992) explains that this image was deemed acceptable because of the subordinated 'old-time' Māori identity of the figures.

Figure 1. Steele, V. (1908). Spoils to the Victor. [Oil on canvas]. In Tamati-Quennell, M. (1993). Pu Manawa. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa: Wellington, New Zealand.

A bound and nude European woman would have been unacceptable in the same context. Acting as both a sexual and colonial representation of conquest this image embodies availability and submission, and provides insight into the attitudes which dominated the process of colonisation (Erai, 2007).

There are a plethora of images of Māori women, captured by (predominately male) western artists from their own particular perspectives. These portrayals are viewed as historical

artifacts, often valued for their technique, but also importantly for their descriptions of context and culture at the time of their capture. They remain in our galleries and art collections and, unless viewed through a critical lens, they continue to reinforce marginalising discourses about both Aotearoa's indigenous and colonising people, our histories, and women.

Although Māori women have been marginalised and oppressed by both colonisation and patriarchy they have not been subordinate or passive in responding. Resistance has been undertaken in many formats and the Māori voice through art has been a dominant one. In 1988 Shona Rapira Davies life-size ceramic installation of a group of women's figures (entitled Nga Mōrehu - the Survivors)* was installed into the Govett Brewster Gallery in New Plymouth (*please note that this image is not reproduced in this context, out of respect for the artist's wishes). Her work acknowledges the status of Māori women as survivors of this ongoing, determined, and destructive campaign of violence which we benignly name colonisation. At the time this work was first presented to the public it sat alongside a decade of stories taken off the marae by Māori 'protestors' and 'radical activists'. These stories had struggled to give voice to a colonising violence which tried to "subordinate the dignity of innocent people - philosophers and gardeners, lovers and fighters, priests and children" (Jackson, in Mikaere, 2011, p.xiii). The hostile and derogatory attitudes carried by Māori women appear in this work as statements scaring some of the terracotta figures. The pain and grief of colonisation are present, but the artist has overwhelmingly presented the beauty and strength of Māori women delivering the karanga. Both the scars of the past and the hope for the future sit together. The title of Rapira-Davies work evokes a narrative of people who have experienced great suffering, who are not only branded as different to those who have not but are also considered somehow deficient as a result of their suffering. Rapira-Davies' work acknowledge the strength, beauty, and survival of her people, but also the burden of grief that is carried forward. Her work challenges the way Māori women are seen and represented. It resists negative stereotypes and deficit approaches and asks us to see her people her way.

While much has been done to expose and redress historical injustices toward Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, the underlying beliefs which gave rise to this oppression are much slower to change. Lying insidiously beneath the surface, these indirect forms of violence, described by Cazalet and Lane (2000) as "processes of exploitation, alienation and repression occurring through social institutions and legitimised in an ongoing way by cultural factors such as language, beliefs, history and art" (p.62), continue to impact on everyday experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. Both race and gender continue to function in a system of oppression to connect violence to legitimate social relationships (Pitman, 2012).

Violence against Women

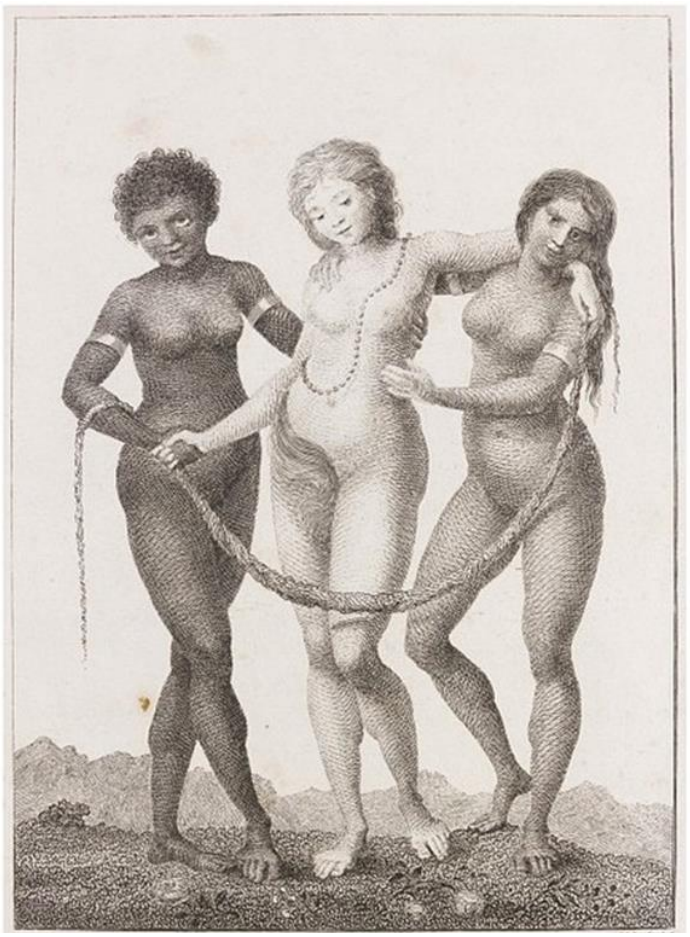


Figure 2*:* Blake, W. (1757-1827). *Europe Supported by Africa and America*. [Etching].
In Berger, J. (1977). *Ways of Seeing.* London: Penguin

"No time abates the first despair and awe

But wonder ceases soon;

the weirdest thing

Is felt less strange beneath the lawless law

Where Death-in-Life is the eternal King;

Crushed impotent beneath this reign of terror,

Dazed with such mysteries of woe and error,

The soul is too outworn for wondering"

(Thomson, 1880, p.19)

Naturalised Patriarchal Domination

In 2016 there were 118,910 family violence investigations by Police in Aotearoa New Zealand. Eighty nine percent of the 5072 applications for protection orders were made by women, and one in three women (35%) reported physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner occurring in their lifetime. When psychological and emotional violence were included these statistics rose to a staggering 55%, yet police research indicates that only 18 - 25% of all incidents are even reported. Between 2009 and 2015 there were 92 deaths directly attributed to intimate partner violence in this country (New Zealand Family

Violence Clearinghouse, 2017). Grounded in a culture which has normalised patriarchal ideology, and legitimated, justified, and concealed colonial violence, violence against women and children in Aotearoa New Zealand thrives (Dobbs and Eruera, 2014).

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) defines violence against women as "any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (p.3). Many feminist definitions of violence against women (which is commonly termed intimate partner violence or IPV) focus on patriarchal terrorism and denote a breadth of frequent and repetitive behaviours by men against women, which extend beyond physical abuse and may escalate to a fatal level. These behaviours include psychological and emotional violence and the use of coercive control (Fanslow and Robinson, 2011; Johnson, 1995; Stark, 2009; Walton, 2012). The key distinction between this and other definitions of violence against women is considered by most commentators to lie in the motivation or intent behind the violence. In men's violence against women, or IPV, this intent is one of purposeful and coercive control (Johnson 1995, Stark, 2009), also described as entrapment by the Family Violence Death Review Committee (2015). It is important to note that Western models which view domestic violence as an abuse of power in intimate relationships do not consistently fit with some indigenous people understandings of family violence as "embedded in a social context of colonisation, dislocation, and poverty" (Nickson, Dunstan, Esperanza, and Barker, 2011, p.88). For the purposes of this report a feminist perspective on men's violence against women is taken, but the context of colonial dominance in Aotearoa is acknowledged.

Historically embedded western viewpoints on the difference of women, who are described by Adams (2012) as the 'original other', dominate our social media, despite many years of feminist activism (Dyer, 2002; Hooks, 1995; Lester and Ross, 2003; Ross and Lester 2011). These traditionally accepted myths of women as different, therefore inferior, define women

as the weaker sex (Howard, 1984), in need of guidance and supervision (Adams, 2012); as emotional or hysterical and therefore not rational (Meek 2013) ; as sexual objects (Berger, 1977; Hedges, 2009; Woolf, 1991); or as compliant mothers, wives and homemakers (Jagger and Rothenberg, 1993; Adams, 2012).These oppositional perspectives have naturalised patriarchal domination, and given power to the colonising attitudes which prevail among perpetrators of violence (Adams, 2012). Clearly demonstrated in William Blake's etching [figure 2] the long relationship between dominance over women and dominance over land is embodied, as the women in this work are represented as countries; vulnerable, exposed, and seeking subjugation. It is interesting to note the eye contact made by the exotic and erotic indigenous women, the "objects of sexual colonial fantasy" (Erai, 2007, p.134), while the only Western woman has her eyes lowered and her pubic area modestly covered. She wears a string of pearls while her sisters have metal arm bands and appear to be roped together, yet all three women are naked, passive, and waiting to be taken. Displayed in a manner that best facilitates the viewer's fantasy of sexual possession, the bodies are full frontal. Body hair is notably absent, in the European tradition. Hair is associated with sexual power and passion, so by minimising this the spectator may monopolise the women's passion and feed his own sexual appetite (Berger, 1977).

Contemporary sexualised representations of women's naked available bodies are now increasingly accessible – in advertising, on the internet, in galleries - everywhere we look we are surrounded by this type of debasing imagery. Ready access to online media has also allowed an exponential rise in the availability of pornographic materials. These materials have a profound effect on the way we view those portrayed. From the 1980's the pornography industry has progressively focused on male control and cruelty, sexual domination and the mainstreaming of "an open fusion of physical abuse and sex, of extreme violence, horrible acts of degradation against women with an increasingly twisted eroticism" (Hedges, 2009, p.72). Focusing on women as submissive objects, without human attributes or distinct identities, pornography has become embedded into our cultures and has become a socially accepted expression which allows sexual humiliation, racial abuse, rape, torture, psychological and physical violence without retribution. This depraved world of deeply

entrenched racial and sexual stereotypes glorifies men's rights to use force and control to dominate women, and "messes with the way you think of women" (Smith in Hedges, 2009, p.57).

Richardson and Wade (2009) and Adams (2012) correlate the tactics of power and control used to colonise indigenous people directly with those used by abusive men to dominate women. These tactics include appropriation and ownership, or 'naming and claiming' (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), of women as objectified possessions; isolation and erasure of familial and cultural connections; the use of coercion and control to suppress functioning, seen in the application of strict codes of conduct, surveillance, and laws (Stark, 2009, Richardson, 2010); minimisation of the damage; blaming and shaming (Jury, 2009). Layers of imposed activity; instability and intimidation leading to disruption and confusion; physical and sexual violence; financial deprivation and destabilisation; and mental, emotional, and psychological cruelty also disempower and disconnect (Allen and Wozniak, 2011; Bouson, 2009; Jury, 2009; Jones, 2012; Walton, 2012). The insidious, unseen, 'natural', and minimised nature of many of these tactics mean that those affected often adjust to these 'norms' and experience a complete loss of identity (Bouson, 2009; Jones, 2012). Adams describes this as a colonisation process which extends "beyond the appropriation of individual domains – body, behaviour, mind, and heart … experienced as a combined effect, a total appropriation" (2012, p.104), or an internalised belief system (Bancroft, 2002; Brown, 2005: Evans, 1996).

The tactics of control through gender based violence and this 'colonisation of the mind' are subjects which I addressed in my 2012 post-graduate painting installation *PASSAGE*, held at St Andrews in the City, Palmerston North. Taken from my own experience of 13 years of violence the 12 works (some of these are included in the prologue) spoke of many of the tactics of coercive control and violence which I experienced, and my responses to these. They represented my experience from my perspective, acting as a voice for something I have no words to describe. They are a crucial form of self-representation. This series of

works has been my touchstone. It has allowed me to walk this kaupapa with integrity and honesty, offering others my story and a way of understanding it. I have shared the works and my story so often now that it comes more easily. I know the power art has to self-represent responses to violence, and identity, because I see it when I share my own narrative. The opposing social responses I have received to my experiences, and the power these art works have given back to me are difficult to pin down as data, but not to understand. This doctoral research extends on these previous works, exposing the way that women who have experienced violence are represented through literature and imagery. It offers a challenge to the binaries, stereotypes, and myths implicit in many of these representations by analysing pertinent aspects of the social justice approach taken by WAI the Women's Art Initiative Collective. This analysis then informs a personal and collaborative body of artwork, which is discussed in Chapter Seven.

The breadth and complexity of the tactics used by perpetrators of violence are often difficult to quantify, and for those experiencing them, almost impossible to identify. One tool which offers a clear visual analysis of some of these tactics is the Duluth Power and Control Wheel [figure 3] which was developed in 1984 by women involved in the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota. While it is not without critique and has undergone development over time, the Power and Control Wheel [Figure 3] does offer a clear way of describing what is termed 'battering', or is now more commonly known as IPV (Gondolf, 2007). Documenting the most common abusive behaviours and tactics used against the women questioned, the Power and Control Wheel is characterised by the pattern of actions used to intentionally control or dominate an intimate partner.

> "That is why the words "power and control" are in the center of the wheel. A batterer systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instill fear in his partner. These behaviors are the spokes of the wheel. Physical and sexual violence holds it all together—this violence is the rim of the wheel" (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programmes, 2017).

Figure 3*:* (1984). *Duluth Power and Control Wheel*. [Diagram]. Retrieved from http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf

The social binary of intimacy and isolation clearly reflects the conflict that violence creates. For many women the reality of losing their children because they are not seen to be resisting or fleeing violence, or are 'failing to protect' them, creates an actual physical distance, and a terrible rupture of the emotional bond. The perpetrator carefully constructs an emotional void around the 'victim' also, isolating her from any potential help. Compounding the sense of shame and difference is the invisible, non-physical nature of much of the violence. If a woman cannot show her trauma in an obvious physical way then seeking help and being believed become overwhelmingly difficult propositions and this is compounded by the majority of media portrayals which suggest strongly that physical injury

categorises and defines abuse (Bouson, 2009; Jury, 2009; Jones, 2012; Walton, 2012). Stereotypical understandings of physical violence as 'battering' also negate the many ways that women are physically injured without bruises, broken bones or black eyes. How do we categorise the violence of unwanted tattoos, piercings, or breast augmentation for instance? They may have an enormous impact on a woman's physical being, but far more importantly on her sense of agency and identity. They remain as permanent scars on her personal landscape, but they are seldom (if ever) included in descriptions of violence against women.

Responding to 'victims'

While women may be viewed as 'other' to the dominant male stereotype, abused women are seen as even more of an 'other' – different even from 'normal' women. While women's experiences are never homogenous, it is often common for perpetrators to use coercive control to enforce beliefs of difference or deficit to the point where women themselves feel this distinction and it becomes an added form of isolation. Nina Mariette (1997), a woman who experienced abuse as a child, comments on this difference, "although I met some good, caring women, I felt like an alien, as if I almost belonged to a different species" (p.9). For Indigenous women who have experienced violence this separation is further compounded by deficit colonial stereotypes, which are justified based on the 'God given' superiority of Europeans and the presumed natural deficiencies of indigenous people. How abused Pākehā women, abused Māori women, and abused 'other' people are seen (and therefore are represented) is relegated to wide categories of individual brokenness, vulnerability, deficit, and helplessness. Psychotherapy can then function as a political and ideological tool which may oppress, subjugate and control as much as it liberates. Dominant methods and methodologies are embedded in cultural epistemologies and these are invisibly validated and supported, flourishing in the perceived apolitical or neutral space of Aotearoa (Woodard, 2014). Wade (1995) describes a colonial code of relationship embedded in the helping discourses of various human services which utilise psychology "as a tool to identify some people as healthy and others as unwell and therefore less deserving" (p.132)

misrepresenting them as deficient and therefore in need of assistance from those who are proficient.

This code considers

1) I am proficient

2) You are deficient, therefore I have the right to

3) Fix you, diagnose you, change you, intern you

4) For your own good

Perceptions of abused women as somehow to blame for their situation; as obviously lacking in intelligence or they would leave; as uneducated, Māori, and poor, are common and these perceived social stigma further enforce the difficulty of seeking help or speaking out against this abuse, even to other women (Howard, 1984; Jury, 2009; Walton, 2012). Any woman who is seen to have been abused is then exposed to further stereotyping as a 'victim' of violence or as an abuse 'survivor', with all of the inherent stigma attached to these terms (Allen and Wozniak, 2011), as "certainly, neither the image of the "passive victim" nor the image of the "active survivor" is sufficient to capture the range of victims' experiences, precisely because they are typifications that reduce, rather than add complexity" (Dunn, 2005, p.24). Grounded in perspectives of her vulnerability and instability, and her broken or damaged status within 'normal' society, are attitudes which further control autonomy and identity and therefore 'claim' women as 'other' (Bancroft, 2002; Bouson, 2009; Jones, 2012; Jury, 2009; Mariette, 1997; Walton, 2012). As Mariette (1997) contends "You get so used to the feeling of being not quite right with yourself and the world, and of course being told that it's you who is out of step with the rest of the 'normal' world" (p.25). Numbing this pain and quelling the confusion can be achieved in any number of ways, and often is. If women don't choose to 'self-medicate' then we have the option of being diagnosed and pathologised as depressed, mentally unwell, or any number of other labels. Self-medicating may also lead to other diagnoses if it gets out of hand. Unless there is a real

acknowledgement of resistance, thus upholding dignity, attempts to seek help through therapy may lead to further traumatisation, further diagnoses, and even greater confusion.

Not only are women blamed for the situation, pathologised as broken or victims, and treated as unwell or somehow less than other 'normal' women, they are also given no opportunity to grieve for what has been lost. For many women mourning the loss of our identity, our hopes, dreams and aspirations, our innocence and confidence, our sense of safety, and the person we might have been, is an unacknowledged or unsanctioned grief. This disenfranchised grief has no forms of social support or rituals which allow for its acknowledgement. It is an uncomfortable social problem largely dealt with by ignoring or minimising it. The invisible status of this grief further disconnects and isolates women who may already be experiencing a wide range of other negative social responses (Grebin and Vogel, 2007, Wade, 2013). Remembering is not a popular dialogue yet "Mourning is not about forgetting; mourning is about remembering, a process that may take a lifetime" (Ornstein, 2010, p.631). Once women move into a safe space away from the crisis and the intensity of social support offered - once we have 'talked about it' through therapy, and 'sorted ourselves (not the perpetrators) out' - we are expected to 'get over it', to 'move on' and to stop talking about it, yet "we depend on remembering the practices and effects of domination we wish to lose" (Morgan, 2005, p.358).

So much effort goes into the crisis – once it is over and women are seen to be functioning 'normally' then people often lose interest (Chung, 2016). If the expected passage of transition is not followed then women may be perceived as still damaged, or as choosing to remain stuck in a 'victim mentality' for reasons that continue to serve them. The process of grieving, remembering, and reclaiming their identities may take a lot longer than anticipated and they are left to do this alone, often without adequate acknowledgement that what they have lived through is even a loss. It is this activity, which links strongly to the process of decolonisation for Māori, which motivates the doctoral research.

The negative social responses received by those perceived as 'victims' not only undermine well-being but also contribute to ongoing suffering. For Indigenous women these social responses are seldom seen as human rights issues (Richardson & Wade, 2010). While violence against Māori women may have operated as a colonising tool it has also been a "crucial means of marking native bodies, a spectacular reification of pre-existing rationales for violence, and a reinscription of race, gender, and sexuality" (Erai, 2007, p27).

I understand the power of social responses as I have been offered many since I walked away from the thirteen years of violence I experienced. Of greatest import was the response of my family, who responded to my flight by closing ranks around my children and me; housing and feeding us, guarding, defending, and upholding us in every way possible. I have an incredible debt of gratitude and an immense pride in these people who are part of me. The response I received from my family to my disclosure of violence was tremendously positive, something which has allowed me a dignity in re-establishing myself. I acknowledge the immeasurable privilege of this support and love.

Academic knowledge of gender based violence has given me a light of understanding and a clearer recognition of my resistance and dignity, but sharing my personal experience of violence through my painting has allowed me to acknowledge it was real, and to clarify the complexity and subtlety for myself. Importantly, the *PASSAGE* paintings also self-represented my experience publicly, portraying violence which is so much more than a physical assault. Sharing my responses to this violence, and my journey of grief and growth has offered me a space to look back from, people to stand beside me, and a new respect for my lived knowledge and ancestry.

Both gender based violence and colonisation are oppressive regimes which construct and ascribe identities to their 'victims', allowing the perpetrators social domination, offering accepted opportunities to isolate and control 'others' and to suppress agency (Natividad, 2014). They impact on the dignity of people and on how they are represented and

responded to. Both systems conceal resistance, and both use language to legitimate and reinforce oppression. While we remain sequestered as individuals our struggles are often seen and represented as personal, intimate, and separate to the universal struggle against oppression. For this to change the power to self-determine our representation and our needs must belong to us – not to the state, the social service agencies, or to groups who are outside of our culture or experience. Men's violence against women continues to thrive in Aotearoa because the colonising attitudes, and the power and control which underpin these, are still condoned and legitimated in many ways, through many social institutions, processes, responses, and behaviours. Challenging these attitudes and exposing the tactics of control used to oppress women are difficult propositions but art has the unique potential to open dialogue and offer insight.

John Pule's quote, at the start of this chapter, offers an opportunity to create a very different framing, in response to these experiences of oppression. Colonisation has laid a heavy weight upon the indigenous people of this country. The darkness of this process of assimilation has attempted to eradicate an entire culture, to erase difference, and to minimise and ignore the violence and injustice perpetrated. Gender based violence also offers a heavy burden to those who have experienced it. The discourses which permit governmental, cultural, institutional, structural, societal, and men's violence against women remain largely unchallenged and are represented in the social responses we receive in so many ways. In the shadow of these discourses we cherish the light we hold. We acknowledge the importance of our own knowledge and strengths, our right to self-represent, our place, our culture, and our ancestors. We look for ways to reinstate light, we acknowledge that it exists - in its absence it has a greater presence. When we are lost in grief there is a tremendous sense of knowing, we know with utter conviction the value of what has been lost and of what we still hold. This knowing brings clarity and with clarity comes light. The heavier our weight of grief, the greater our knowledge of light.

Healer, tohunga, and scholar, Rev. Māori Marsden describes the Māori concept of te kore as "not, negative, nothing" an absolute, but describes te korekore (an intensification of te kore) as the concept of absolute potential, as the negative "proceeds beyond its limits and assumes the characteristics of the positive" (2003, p.20). As a realm of absolute potential te korekore is seen by Marsden as a place from which growth can proceed. Growth requires light. If we apply this concept to John Pule's stones they remain present, but in viewing them as absolute potential they are transformed from oppressive burdens into potential bodies of light. From the heavy stones we carry can come knowledge and a lightness of being in the world - it is an empowering way of thinking.

It is a way of thinking that colours this research.

Chapter 2 Methodology and Method

"Committing ourselves to anti-oppressive work means committing to social change and to taking an active role in that change. Being an anti-oppressive researcher means that there is political purpose and action to your research work"

(Potts & Brown, 2004, p.103).

Research is a dirty word for some of us. It brings to mind colonising and oppressive ways of working with communities and individuals, misrepresentation, and undignifying methods of extracting and sharing knowledge. Scientific and rational approaches to quantifying those studied may "evoke images of ethnographers, missionaries, explorers, and social scientists voyeuristically noting their observations" (Brown and Strega, 2005, p.114).

This research was undertaken within the Women's Art Initiative (WAI) collective. WAI is a standalone collective of women who meet weekly to make art as a personal and social justice response to their experiences of violence. Set up in Palmerston North, Aotearoa New Zealand, in 2013 as part of my research towards a Masters in Māori Visual Arts, WAI was fostered, mentored, and developed within the protective space of Te Pūtahi a Toi, Māori Art Knowledge and Education, at Massey University in Palmerston North. WAI began with seven members but at the time of writing the collective now has forty-seven members who identify as Māori, European, and Pacific Islanders. These women form the Palmerston North WAI Collective. WAI are funded on a year to year basis through ongoing applications to community and arts funding bodies. The funding that we manage to access normally just covers our yearly studio rental and some art making resources.

I am both a member of this collective and the facilitator. The WAI initiative is an ongoing venture – it continues to grow and change and the kaupapa (philosophy) deepens with every passing year. As part of this PhD Creative Arts research the WAI kaupapa has been

translated into a written model of practice (in the form of members, facilitators and agency guidebooks) which is currently being trialed by three Women's Refuges in Wellington and Blenheim. This research also informs a body of personal and collaborative art works which are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Knowledge can be a powerful tool for maintaining dominant discourses – it is unmistakably and inevitably socially constructed and political, but it also offers the opportunity to actively engage in social change. How is it possible then, within this particular body of research, to undertake an ethical and respectful gathering and sharing of the intrinsic knowledges of women who have experienced violence? To promote accurate representation and dignifying ways of understanding, which impact on the social responses women receive, we must transcend many established rules and limitations around what counts as knowledge, who can undertake legitimate research, and how this can be achieved. Marginalised knowledge, like that held within the WAI collective, is crucial in the fight for social transformation, and must be identified as legitimate discourses, whose participants are "active agents and stakeholders" (Downes, Kelly, and Westmarland, 2014, p.1).

Developing a methodology which acknowledges and addresses the often oppressive processes and outcomes of research is very necessary in this context. The following methodology and method outlined are forms of resistance in themselves - they offer this research as social justice activism 'in the sense of making a personal commitment to action, of purposefully working to make change" (Brown and Strega, 2005, p.260). This methodology directly informs the WAI Spirographic Model of practice outlined in Chapter Five.

Anti- oppressive research

In electing to undertake this research I choose to challenge the way that women who have experienced violence are viewed, represented, and 'managed'. I challenge the oppression that is embedded not only in the society I live in, but in my own thinking, knowledge, actions, and work with others, through ongoing and continual reflection.

I acknowledge my social location as a Pākehā woman and an academic researcher, working alongside women from many cultures, experiences, and perspectives, within Aotearoa New Zealand - a colonised land. I actively seek to respect and value the knowledge embedded in people and I am conscious of the differing power structures and biases that sit between us. I challenge deficit-informed research approaches and seek meaning, critical and contextual understanding, social change, and to centre subjugated knowledge that can be used in a practical way to further the interests of those who have been marginalised and oppressed.

My methodology actively foregrounds interpersonal relationships and lived experience. The decision to analyse only the WAI process, way of working, and the symbolism of the artworks produced is a deliberate attempt to avoid exploitative and paternalistic power relations. This research process is not linear or scientific but follows a problem solving, therefore multi-layered, approach. It is research that lives, breathes, answers back, and challenges because it is research that is being walked through in a practical, messy, every day, and very human way. It matters to me that this research makes a difference and offers the women of WAI, whose art work is discussed, a space where their experiences are dignified, validated, and transformed (Brown and Strega, 2005). It matters that it offers authentic and honest representation.

Feminist Research

"Patriarchy shames women. It silences us and renders us culturally unequal and invisible"

(Lewin, 2012, p.144)

Several guiding feminist research principles underpin the methodology of this qualitative project and also reflect the anti-oppressive approach: the research is focused on and values the lived experiences of women; power differentials are acknowledged; the process is collaborative or collectively driven and reflexive; an ethic of care (manaakitanga) is embraced; and the WAI model of practice and process looks at ways of advancing social justice and achieving social change (Burgess-Proctor, 2015). Beckman (2014) notes feminist research is defined by the application of feminist principles rather than by its use of specific methods or its study of topics related to women and gender.

This research attempts to foreground female experience and empowerment, through qualitative research methods, and responds to gender based violence as an issue raised by the women's movement, but more importantly by my own personal experience. This focus is seen by Alice (1999) as fundamental to feminist research. Personalising the research participants, ensuring that they are not objectified through the research process, and prioritising value over technique are also noted as important factors in a feminist research process. This understanding is one that is privileged in this research project.

Dominant cultural narratives around women may involve patriarchal language and imagery which subjugate and reinforce male privilege and desire. A feminist focus on gender and power in the perpetration of violence and the roles these play in the representation of women, specifically through art, acknowledge these discourses through which violence not only continues to occur but is also legitimated. An awareness of the role these discourses play within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, against the backdrop of colonisation and

dominant mythologies, has been crucial in challenging definitions and understandings that surround women who have experienced violence and abuse. Viewed as tools of oppression within a feminist framework these dominant discourses have formed a background to this research.

My personal (rather than professional) relationships with the women of WAI, and my fellow facilitators, my understanding of their narratives, and the reasons for their themes and technical choices, inform this research. Drawing on my own responses to and inherent understanding of the violence I have experienced, and those which the WAI women share with me, has also aided my interpretation of the WAI artworks and art making approaches as data. As a feminist researcher my reflective attempts to recognise what I bring to the research and how participants may interpret this are also crucial in guarding against power imbalances, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation (Beckman, 2014).

Sprague (2005) outlines the simple changes in language which ensure transparency around the researcher's voice and negate the idea of marginalising, silent, academic authorship. The use of personal pronouns and an active rather than a passive voice are seen to expose the personhood of the author. Outlining the reasons for interest in the research are also seen as revelatory and the researcher's voice can therefore act as a resource for constructing understanding. Ensuring my voice is explicit within this research is crucial. It acknowledge my personal experience of violence and my perspectives as a both a researcher, the facilitator, and a collective member of WAI. My knowledge of violence, and my experience of voicing this through my 2012 painting series, forms a key element of this transparency to participants and readers. Language is also a crucial tool when writing from feminist, Response Based, and anti-oppressive approaches - the word choices we make can critically shift the way women and violence are seen and represented. Throughout this text I have used inverted commas to indicate commonly used ways of representing ideas and people – for instance, the word 'victim'. This overt identification of some words and phrases is very necessary because it makes them visible, it challenges both their acceptance and the

common understandings that are attributed to them. Where possible, I also chose to refer to men's violence against women without using the more common, and mutualising, term intimate partner violence.

Insider research

"Those on the margins have been the objects but rarely the authors of research and the discomfort that those on the margins feel about adopting traditional research approaches and knowledge creation has been interpreted as their personal inability or failings"

(Brown and Strega, 2005, p.7)

Having experienced violence by an intimate partner I cannot stand outside this research. I am a critical insider within the marginalised space occupied by 'victims' and 'survivors' of violence.

A particular benefit of deep insider research is seen by Edwards (2002) as the historical and cultural knowledge, and the awareness of cultural codes, slogans and body language, that the researcher possesses. While Edwards' research focuses on institutions it may apply equally as well to social groupings. Living with the experience of violence and abuse, living within this social category, however invisible and unspoken it may be has a series of codes of conduct and deeply ingrained understandings. Coded statements or veiled references made by a participant are more readily understood by a fellow 'survivor', although each experience of violence remains necessarily unique to the culture and context of the specific participant. The knowledge that the researcher is one of 'us' allows a different, more reciprocal, connection to be created (Spargue, 2005). This is especially important when those being researched are routinely viewed as less reliable, more vulnerable or damaged due to their experiences, and the dominant evaluation of outsider research undertaken often involves diagnostic processes used in physical medicine (Sweeny, Beresford, Faulkner, Nettle and Rose, 2009).

The danger of 'outsider' researchers misframing information, failing to understand what they are told, and therefore their inability to adjust their approach is described by Langfield and Maclean (2009) in a comparison of Holocaust survivor and non-survivor interviewers. The authors state that interviewers can knowingly or unknowingly significantly compromise the integrity of testimony, "in the worst cases the interviewer is left asking meaningless questions that literally render the survivor speechless" (p.205). If the prevailing approach to survivor research comes from a medicalised, treatment-based, scientific, 'unbiased and objective' outsider model then intrinsically understood social contexts and the nuances of expressed narratives may be lost or misread. Survivor research challenges perceptions around both what valid research is and how the researcher approaches this. Sweeney, Beresford, Faulkner, Nettle, & Rose. (2009) identify the importance of bringing about social change through survivor research which is more equal and collaborative and which offers credibility to "our take on things, our perspectives, insights, experiences, understanding and knowledge" (p.179).

It must be noted that there is a dynamic of the insider also being an outsider and the fluctuation between these polarities may be a difficult relationship to manage. While researching as an insider offers a very specific approach, and prioritises experiential or 'lived' knowledge, it is important to acknowledge that it is impossible to ever be completely 'inside' a group when acting as a researcher. It is possible to share a cultural perspective or an experience of oppression or marginalisation. Likewise it is possible to participate within the group but there is inevitably always an element of being also an outsider. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) comments on the multiple ways of being both insider and outsider and the problems this disjuncture may cause. She describes the importance of remaining reflexive and the need to create ethical, respectful and humble relationships with communities. The knowledge that you remain the researcher, not the researched, the facilitator and not only a collective member, is crucial. I am inside and I am also outside of the WAI collective. Balancing and combining these dualities is no easy task. There is a conflict inherent in this positioning.

Allen & Wozniak (2011) describe the complex task of listening or hearing as one which is affected by both our blindness and our insight, arguing that superimposing a professional interpretation on the narratives of everyday people may remove those ordinary voices and they may instead become the authority of the professionals. This process of data collecting may be made even more difficult by the unscientific and emotive process of analysing artworks – if listening or hearing is complex, how much harder is it to see and interpret both the creative process and its outcomes, despite this analysis being informed by accepted artistic conventions, techniques and understandings?

The influence of the necessary relationships with the women of WAI will also impact on the analysis, informing and contributing but also possibly clouding the analysis. Both insight and blindness must be accepted Back (2007, p.12) contends, and "awareness of our blindness must be a constant companion in our data collection methods". This limitation may be best addressed through the development and maintenance of frank relationships with those who are participating.

As this research is being undertaken by a qualified artist and teacher, not a therapist or counsellor, the relationships with each of the social agencies supporting the regional WAI collectives and the individuals within these were perceived as necessary in responding to adverse emotional and psychological responses. For women sharing their narratives of violence through this process and their artwork, and for those who continued to face ongoing violence during participation, having access to this support and advocacy was deemed a vital component within the ethical approval process. However, because of the supportive nature of the WAI collective and women's own autonomy in accessing any outside assistance they required, it was largely not necessary. Outside agency support has been an imperative backing for the researcher and the two new regional facilitators, in walking alongside the collective and in hearing women's individual narratives of violence.

Creative and Response Based Practice

Aesthetic intervention through creative practice makes sense when working from a critical, feminist or decolonising perspective. It offers not only the potential for individual and collective knowledge production but also for public dissemination of this through the exhibition or presentation process, which plays a crucial role in validating and hearing these narratives. As such it is a key part of the framework of the methodology chosen for this project.

Creative practice is a key component of the WAI research process. Initially during the set up stages of WAI Palmerston North, for the Masters in Māori Visual Arts (MMVA) this was goal oriented and informed by research, an approach which is described by Smith and Dean (2009) as research-led practice. Active engagement in the process of art-making is a key component in the WAI kaupapa and this approach is considered central to practice-led research. These two ways of working fit quite comfortably together, creating a synergy which allows for the possibility of collaboration between myself and the participants and between the participants themselves. Practice-led research allowed a space where WAI could create knowledge specific to us, both as a collective and as individual practitioners. Adams (2014) views practice-led research as a critical and creative tool for developing multi-sensory understandings, one which holds the potential to inform and transform practice and theoretical understanding.

Smith and Dean (2009, p.47) also acknowledge the importance of "knowledge embedded in practice, knowledge argued in a thesis, and knowledge constructed as discourse within the institutional setting" all of which are seen to contribute to new ways of meaning making. Using a research-led approach in the MMVA research allowed me to move from a space of the known to the unknown, finding my feet with WAI before we tackled the ocean-like expanse of the unknown in a search for new knowledge – the practice-led component of this research. The knowledge created through this shifting process then becomes layered –

participants develop knowledge which transforms their practice, this practice then offers knowledge to the research process which ultimately transforms my own personal practice. Visual Art research methods are participatory and interpretive and use strategies which involve "participants creating art that ultimately serves both as data, and may also represent data" (Leavy, 2015, p.227).

It is important to note that the methodology of this study is not based on art therapy but on an active engagement in art making which views the participants as whole functioning people; an holistic, and Response Based Practice (Wade, 2007) approach. Response Based Practice (RBP) upholds dignity, acknowledges the resistance of those who have experienced violence, and addresses the power of social responses and language which impact upon disclosures and wellbeing. RBP views the whole person within a wider social context. RBP underpins the kaupapa of this research. Howells and Zelnik's (2009) study on the effect of participation in an art studio for participants diagnosed with mental illness exemplifies the importance of making art outside of the therapy bracket as we do at WAI, noting that "many people commented on this fact as an essential part of their decision to participate in the program – that is, they were looking for a place to do art, to be students, and not for a place to receive therapy" (p.220). Despite the recorded therapeutic effects of art making it was distinctly not discerned as therapy by the participants in Howell and Zelnik's study. To offer art as a form of therapy or healing I have come to realise infers that there is a lack of wholeness, a deficit or brokenness that someone more whole has the solution to (Wade, 2013). I have no training in art therapy and had no desire to pathologise myself, the participants, or the art we create through such an approach. WAI simply offers women the opportunity, materials, community, and space to make art.

Kaupapa Māori

This is not a Kaupapa Māori research project. However, despite being Pākehā, I have chosen to approach the WAI collective research process with an acknowledgement of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, p. 120) Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles. These principles guide the relationship and community approach to the WAI project. As many of the collective members are Māori women this approach may better accommodate their values and experiences.

The principles are:

1. Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)
2. Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face)
3. Titiro, whakarongo…kōrero (look, listen…speak)
4. Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
5. Kia tūpato (be cautious)
6. Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)
7. Kaua e māhaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)

My understandings of these Kaupapa Māori Research principles comes from my own Western world view and as such have been interpreted in a way which may differ completely from a Māori world view. Reflecting universal values Tuhiwai Smith's principles offer wide applicability, with the added integrity of having been developed within Aotearoa New Zealand - the same context that the WAI collective work and live in. While Tuhiwai Smith does not consider these ethical principles a code of conduct, rather a cultural prescription, they demonstrate a values based, anti-oppressive, and decolonising approach to working with participants which aligns well with feminist precepts, and they simply make sense to me. This holistic approach to the person fits my own hard won understanding of

what I need to feel my dignity and identity have been respected, and therefore what I believe are necessary principles in working alongside other women. I have not found a similar outline in a feminist text although Levine and Levine (2011) describe the need for the approach to social change and social action through people as requiring a “humble and respectful attitude” (p.29).

WAI participants were not chosen by ethnicity, but by personal experience, therefore they have come from a wide range of cultural and ethnic positionings. As I am Pākehā, appropriate cultural, academic and artistic support has been sought in an ongoing manner. The Treaty of Waitangi embedded concepts of protection, participation and partnership have been (and continue to be) carefully considered in the facilitation of the collective. As required, Māori and artists from other cultural groups have been co-opted in to offer relevant skills and cultural support, and to assist with data analysis. All participants have been offered the opportunity to engage in discussion and to partner in the facilitation of appropriate art-making experiences. Both Massey supervisors are Māori and are competent in Te Reo Māori and tikanga (customs or protocols). Their advice has been sought in matters relating to Māori language and tikanga when these arose during the research project.

It is not my intention to appropriate cultural knowledge which is not mine to take, merely to approach the research in the most respectful and ethical manner possible. The importance of respecting those who have chosen to be involved in this project, and sharing control and ownership of the group process with them fits well within my understanding of these Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles.

Method

A proposal for this qualitative research was submitted during the confirmation process. This proposal involved trailing the WAI Model of practice alongside three different regional Women's Refuges, collecting written reflections, writing guidebooks, developing the WAI model of practice, and responding to the research findings through a written dissertation and personal body of artworks.

Massey University Human Ethics approval was sought and confirmed. This process was a much simpler process than the original ethical approval process undertaken for the Master of Māori Visual Arts (MMVA) research project which instigated the WAI collective. Having an established approach and a track record of safe facilitation and exhibiting, and the knowledge to approach the ethical application thoroughly and with the appropriate level of information, ensured many of the questions around participant safety and wellbeing, and Massey University liability, did not require further clarification. The process of attaining the initial ethical approval for the MMVA project, due to the perception that it was of a highly sensitive and risky nature, was a much more difficult process, which I found immensely frustrating as I felt that many assumptions and stereotypes impacted upon the information I was required to provide. Both my own knowledge of how to approach the PhD ethical application and the Massey University Human Ethics Committee's reading of this ensured this was a much less compromising process than the MMVA application.

The Palmerston North WAI collective has continued to function as a standalone venture since its inception in 2013 as part of my MMVA research into ways that women can self-represent their responses to violence, without risking further exposure or humiliation. I continue to facilitate this collective.

Women currently involved in the WAI collective, and women considering involvement, were given information on the WAI PhD research process, in alignment with the Massey

University Human Ethics application. Those who expressed interest in participating were asked to complete permission forms and formative and summative questionnaires each year of the research. All outside artists working with WAI were required to complete confidentiality forms.

This research also involved trialing the Palmerston North WAI model of practice in two other regions. Three Independent Women's Refuge with sturdy analysis and application of Response Based Practice principles participated.

Participants were invited into the WAI collectives by the participating agencies. In Palmerston North these are: Palmerston North Women's Refuge, Abuse Rape Crisis, Te Waka Huia and Te Roopu Whakaruruhau Māori Women's Refuge. In Wellington these agencies are Te Whare Rokiroki Māori Women's Refuge and Wellington Women's Refuge; and in Blenheim the Marlborough Women's Refuge and Sexual Assault Resource Centre.

Ongoing weekly reflections on the Palmerston North WAI art making and collective processes, concepts, techniques and understandings were recorded as data. Recording of the set up and mentoring processes and agency and facilitator reflections on the two new WAI collectives was also intended, and monthly meetings were planned to unpack these reflections with those participating, however the time required by the new facilitators and agencies for the set up process prohibited any data gathering. This information is therefore not part of the data presented. Instead an in-depth study was made of the Palmerston North WAI collective's approach and the outcomes of this.

The written reflections, the collective kaupapa, and the WAI PN art works (with individual written permissions), art making processes and understandings form the data. A reflective analysis explores the relevant WAI art making and thinking approaches, symbols, techniques, methods, media, materials, and design elements. Evidence in the form of

photographs of art making processes, and art works as outcomes, were recorded with permission. Collective guidebooks (Appendices A, B & C) were written. These books outline the key tenets of the WAI model of practice for collective members, facilitators and agencies. The guidebooks are viewed as living documents as they will continue to be updated in direct response to the wider WAI collective's kaupapa and aspirations long after this research is complete.

Reflective analysis was undertaken and the WAI model of practice, guidebooks, kaupapa and this personal report were written to reflect the research findings. The written exegesis records the relevant literature, the research approach, data analysis, and the translation of the elements into a personal artistic response. A body of personal and collaborative artworks has been created and will be exhibited in response to the research findings, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD in Creative Arts.

Mapping the Method – an overview

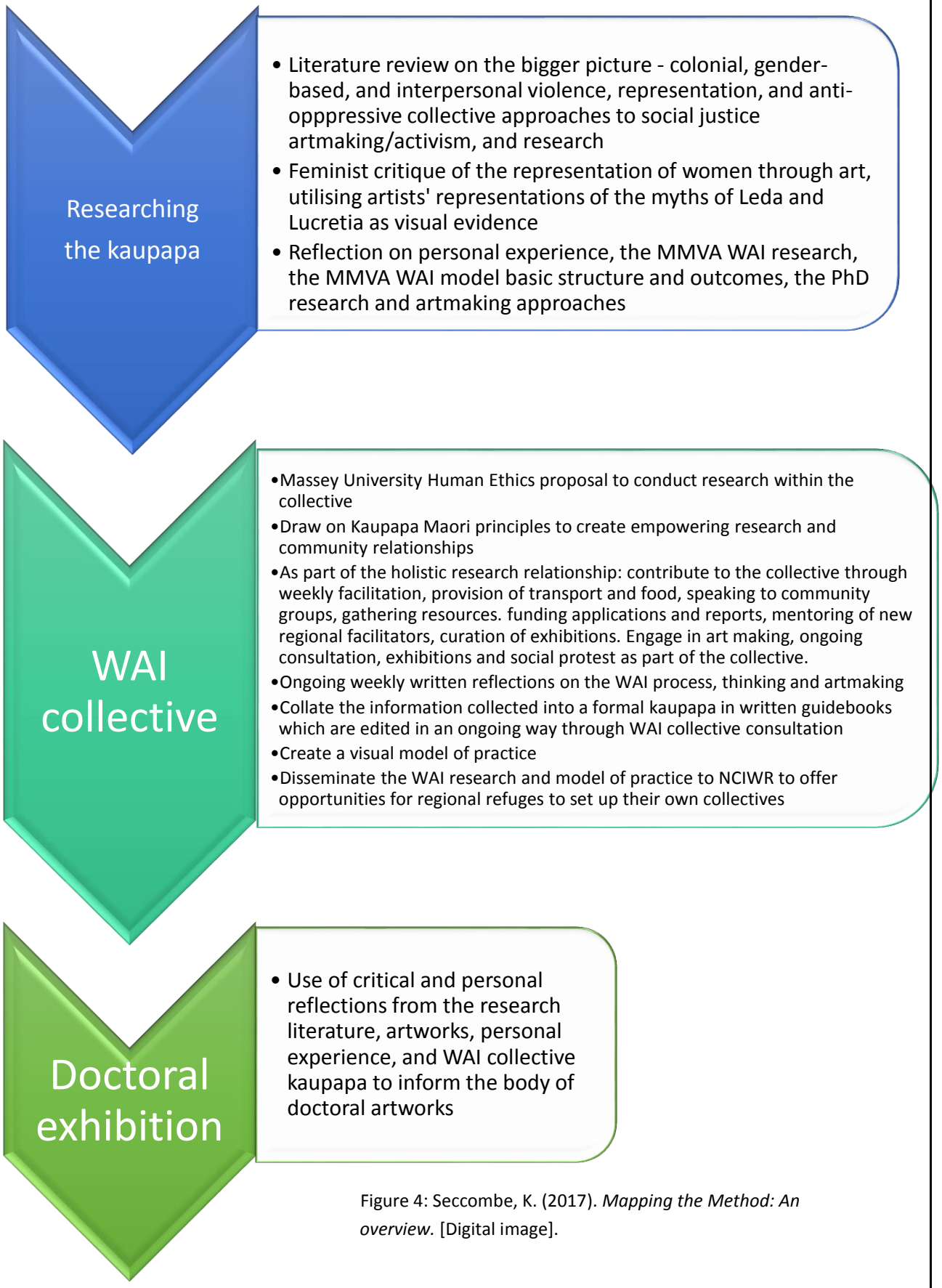


Figure 4: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Mapping the Method: An overview.* [Digital image].

Chapter 3 From MMVA to PhD

The MMVA developed WAI model of practice

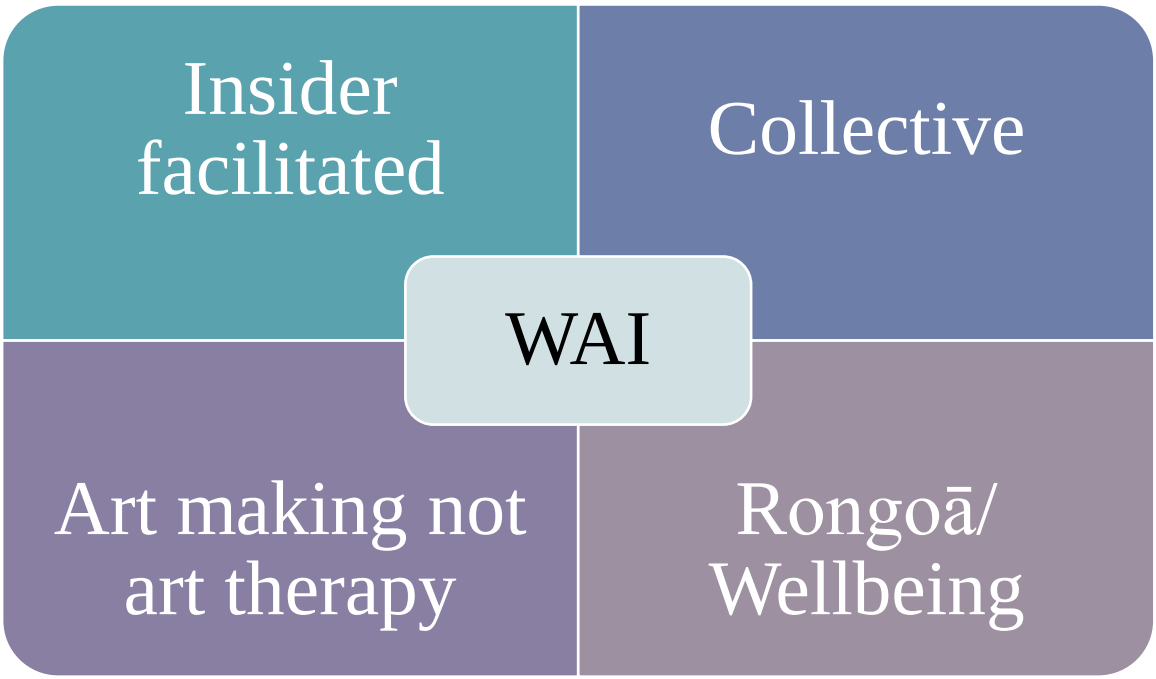


Figure 5*:* McIntyre, K. (2012). *MMVA Pilot Model of Practice*. [Digital image].

The pilot WAI model of practice [figure 5] was developed through my Master of Māori Visual Art research in 2012. It pulled together the elements that worked for WAI, things that held open the space we had created, and grounded our collective. Many other factors contributed to this very basic model and lay around and within it, but an effective visual method of representing this was not developed at the time. The WAI model included Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's (1999) ethical research principles, a Response Based Practice approach, and the concepts of manaakitanga (an ethic of care) and self-representation. The importance of relationships was also identified. When speaking about WAI these ways of working and thinking were always included, but I could not find a visual way to show the position and influence of these concepts effectively or accurately within this early model of practice. At this early stage of analysing the WAI model of practice many of the subtleties of our approach were difficult to define and analyse.

The initial four cornerstones of WAI: rongoā, insider facilitation, an active engagement in art-making, and collectivism are discussed in depth within Chapter two: the Methodology and Chapter four: the Kaupapa.

This basic structure for WAI was instigated in 2013 based on my personal experience and the MMVA research into dignifying ways of offering women the opportunity to self-represent their experiences of violence. While my early understandings gave WAI a beginning they now appear very simple, and they are. It has been, and remains, my intention that WAI is a simple solution to a complex gap, however I realise now the complexity, multiplicity and change that sits within this space must be shown also. This comprehension has informed the PhD research questions and aims.

PhD research Questions and aims

What are the key elements of the WAI kaupapa in 2017?

How do the WAI approach to artmaking and the outcomes of this process offer self/alternate representation of women who have experienced violence?

How can the WAI PhD model of practice and kaupapa be effectively demonstrated visually?

How can I share key elements of the WAI research findings through my personal art making?

Ethics

"By configuring research "subjects" in particular and limited ways, ethical review procedures are not only often problematic for social justice researchers, but fail to consider ethical questions that are vitally important to them, such as voice, representation and collaboration"

(Brown and Strega, 2005, p.4)

Ethical considerations have been my constant companions throughout this study. They have required a continual, focused, and deeply self-reflective approach. They have kept me awake at night and challenged almost everything I think I know about myself. In fighting for justice all aspects of injustice must be considered, pulled apart, questioned, and addressed. The very foundation of this research is my own experience of oppression, and this both colours and clouds my approach. I embrace an ethical understanding which is grounded in my personal truths, but also in a sense of care for others, in my hope for social change, and in what I hope are respectful, practical approaches to my research. I care deeply that women are represented in ways that do not further marginalise us and that post-crisis responses to these injustices are directly informed by those of us who know violence personally and have a good analysis of our experiences and the wider discourse. It must be noted here, however, that as many women do not report or disclose violence there may be responses to injustice that appear to come from 'outsiders', but which actually come from unacknowledged 'insiders' who have (for many reasons) chosen not to disclose their experiences.

I am a participant in this research. I work alongside the other participants, and non-participating collective members. I share stories and I listen to stories. I make art. I have worked hard to develop safe, warm, and respectful relationships with these women. As a collective we share a sense of concern and responsibility for each other, for our children, and for the messages we give to those viewing our artwork. Together we have found meaningful, rich, individual and collective ways of representing ourselves which challenge and contravene the deficit ways in which we are normally seen. Together we have

developed a moral code which directs our philosophy (kaupapa) and our ways of working together (kawa). An ethic of care (manaakitanga) and our shared sense of solidarity and community is the best protection I can offer to the intimacy we have developed.

I am led by the aspirations of the WAI collective. The compassionate and transformative processes and practices of WAI are deeply embedded in our understandings of being de-humanised, of having our resistance to violence overlooked, or ignored, and of having moral, ethical, physical, cultural, spiritual, financial, and political agency taken from us. As a woman who has experienced violence I understand respect because I have lived with the many forms that disrespect can take. I understand dignity because I have lived with humiliating indignity. I understand the pain and shame of being misrepresented, treated unethically, and demeaned for what I have lived through. While it is ethical to obtain consent when involving others in research, that consent does not guarantee that dignity or mana will be upheld, or that genuine respect will be given in honoring what we are gifted in the role of researcher. Oppression teaches us to be mistrustful – for good reasons. In asking the women of WAI to trust me I take a debt of responsibility to them. I owe them their privacy, their autonomy, and an assertion of the strength and resistance they demonstrate. I am personally accountable to the women of WAI, to the facilitators, to the funders, and to the agencies who support us. Acknowledging the way WAI think and work and the way my research sits amongst this kaupapa "forcefully aligns the ethics of research with a politics of the oppressed, with a politics of resistance, hope and freedom" (Denzin and Giardina, 2007, p.35).

Practical steps have been taken to ensure that this research is as transparent, flexible, and honest as possible. Agency, Facilitator, and Members' guides to our collective have been written. These guides address all of the concerns, practicalities, and questions we have responded to as a collective over the past few years. They also outline our kaupapa and kawa. These guides have been read and responded to by the WAI women. Changes and additions have been made and will continue to be made in direct response to the critique of

the collective, and those who work alongside us. While these guides are only appendices to this research they are in fact the crux of what we do and how and why we do it. They offer a simple, effective and practical method of sharing the research with those who will benefit the most from it.

Working in a communal, consensual, way is time consuming and sometimes frustrating. Our regular hui (meetings) offer opportunities for discussion and input into the research process and reflections, however I have found that the research itself is really not of great interest to most of the women. We are all strongly focused on our art making, our self and collective representation, and our relationships. I am proud that the research takes up such a small space in our collective but also somewhat fearful that down that track women may regret their involvement or question my analysis. I allay my fears with the trust that I have in these women, and the knowledge that they trust me. While this unexpected sense of friendship offers me solace I am also aware that it places an extra burden of care upon me. Friends share more and open up more, so I must guard even more carefully against the inadvertent exploitation of this position.

I have learned that I am better to really listen to the everyday conversations and comments that happen amongst the art making than to attempt to activate dialogue that does not happen readily in this space. As the research approach is deliberately framed around analysing the process, outcomes and themes of our collective artmaking every attempt has been made to remove the representation of others' personal narratives. Importantly this research is situated in a practical application – we are walking while we talk. It is research that lives and breathes and therefore must be responded to in a flexible, applied, and ongoing manner.

In choosing to discuss the binaries implicit in representations of women who have experienced violence, my personal artworks in *the clarity of light* installation respond to the WAI research in a manner that I believe is as ethical and respectful as possible.

Chapter 4 Leda - the kaupapa

Figure 6*:* Potoki, G. (2006). *Leda*. [Painting].
In Negovan, T., Rose, J., & Solis, M., (2006). *The Union of Hope and Sadness: The art of Gail Potoki.* Chicago: Olympian.

"A sudden blow: the great wings beating still

Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed

By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,

He holds her helpless breast upon his breast….

….Being so caught up,

So mastered by the brute blood of the air,

Did she put on his knowledge with his power

Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?"

(W. B. Yeats, 1968, p.220)

This chapter outlines the key tenets of the WAI kaupapa – our approach, or philosophy. Part one opens a space around the representation of women and violence, and develops a rationale for self-representation. Part two encompasses the key beliefs and philosophies that underpin our collective approach to art-making. These include: Response Based Practice, resistance to violence, upholding dignity, the WAI concept of 'being', an active engagement in art making, collectivism, and insider facilitation; all of which will be outlined throughout the following chapter. Our definitions of these concepts; the particular and specific ways in which we use terminology, will be carefully canvassed to ensure that the reader has a solid understanding of why it is we do what we do within our collective and the ways in which this influences our artmaking.

The WAI kaupapa recognises the histories of oppression, colonisation, and patriarchal power in Aotearoa New Zealand, and acknowledges the ongoing, shifting nature of these discourses, as discussed in the previous chapter. WAI challenges misinformation and misrepresentation, and the authority of others over our realities. The WAI kaupapa pulls together many threads. It has developed, transformed, and grown in response to the everyday reality of working for social justice as an art-making collective. The richness of the WAI kaupapa comes from the diversity and depth of our experiences, from our conversations, and responses to violence, and from the responses others make to us.

For WAI to be safe and positive, it is crucial that our kaupapa challenges any potential power imbalance, and any deficit or oppressive perspectives, representations, or approaches. We are a collective and we self-represent through an active engagement in art making. We have all experienced violence and therefore have made a deliberate set of choices around the way in which WAI runs; an anti-oppressive, anti-deficit, Response Based Practice approach that upholds our dignity, and acknowledges our resistance to violence and our many ways of 'being' in this space. The word whakaiti can mean violence or abuse in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) – but it translates literally as 'to make small'. As women who have experienced violence we know this diminishing approach well – violence is all about power

and control, making the 'other' small and powerless, naming their deficits, taking their autonomy, representing and deciding things for them. The power to self-represent, and to challenge the representations others make of us, is therefore central to our kaupapa.

Art and artists have, throughout history, provided a particular framing of women's place in the world which shows changes across time and demonstrates the way violence against women is distorted, excused, minimised, and validated, women are blamed, and their resistance to this violence is often misrepresented and unacknowledged. Violence against women, including rape, is a manifestation of an ongoing and oppressive gender inequity (Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014) and artists must share responsibility for perpetuating these inequities through misinformed and bigoted representations. The Western myths (Greek and Roman respectively) of Leda and Lucretia provide stark illustration of this and will be used within this chapter to open the space around the way artists have presented women's experiences of violence. I chose this strategy, as opposed to contemporary media representations of abused women for instance, to avoid exposing and further violating 'real' women and their 'real' experiences.

PART ONE Representation

"We will not be free until the humble women speak"

(Fay. 2011, p. 77)

Figure 7 After Michelangelo, 1475 – 1564 (after 1530). Leda and the Swan. [Oil on canvas, 105.4 x 141 cm]. Retrieved from http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/asset/ANGLIG_10313766

Visual culture has an acknowledged role in the definition and regulation of women's place within both art and social history. It acts as a language which constructs its subjects, regularly situating women not as functioning autonomous people, but as objects or possessions for consumption, offering across time a striking visual anthology of the dissimilar positioning of women both in society and the world of art. Even up until the early 1970's, women were commonly seen as the subjects of art but not as the producers of art. Sexual difference was used as a basis for negative aesthetic valuations of women's art, aligning women with ideologies which defined their place within Western culture. Early female artists were isolated, silenced, and excluded from all of the major Western art movements, although some 'truly exceptional' women artists are recorded as anomalies over time (Chadwick & Chadwick, 1990). The recognition and denial of women as artists relied heavily on stereotypical concepts of women's place, demeanor, and femininity, but

also on ideas of the individual male artist as a gifted and revered genius, with attributions of power recognised by economic privilege and patronage. From the 1800s women became increasingly accepted as producers of art, however their work had strongly constructed boundaries of appropriateness based on their gender – the painting of flowers, small works, feminine, and craft work were deemed acceptable to the prevailing western middle class identity. Women challenging these ideals risked 'unsexing' themselves, and being viewed as sexually deviant (Chadwick & Chadwick, 1990). The silencing of women's voices in the representation of their lives through art has offered perspectives which are constructed by 'others', those outside of their realities, marginalising their lived experiences, entrenching gender based violence, and demeaning identity. These constructed representations can clearly be seen through the following selection of artistic portrayals of the myths of Leda and Lucretia.

Leda is probably one of the most maligned women portrayed in Greek mythology, yet she is portrayed frequently, even today. Norfolk (2011) summarises the myth of Leda and the Swan quite simply: "Zeus was attracted to Leda and, assuming the shape of a swan, raped her when she was having a swim" (p.225). Various versions of the myth exist, with notorious distinctions resting on whether Leda was raped or seduced (Hurley, 2009; Medlicott, 1970; Sword, 1992). There are many, many representations of Leda's rape in poetry, literature, and visual art. In very few of these representations is Leda personalised or shown to resist the rape by Zeus. In general Leda is passive [figure 7], subdued [figure 19], shyly welcoming [figure 18], openly seductive [figures 7 & 20], or not really even a focus [figure 19]. She is objectified, depersonalised, sexualised, exposed, and violated without compunction, while Zeus as the swan is excused, separated from his misdemeanor by the base animal nature he assumes, and glorified as a conqueror. The imagery is erotic.

The confusion, controversy, and misinterpretation of the myth of Leda and the swan clearly reflects broader social conceptions around violence against women. Viewed through a feminist lens, three main issues are readily apparent in the representations given:

1. Men's violence against women is viewed as inevitable; we accept it, we excuse it and even seek to accuse the victim – in this example Leda - for her part in it, and we don't hold the perpetrator fully accountable.
2. We depersonalise the 'victim' and minimise her resistance; we shame her, blame her, and ignore her efforts to defend and dignify herself in a situation of brutal indignity. If we acknowledge her suffering at all, the focus will be on the effect that the abuse has had on her wellbeing, status, or worth. At the same time we personalise the perpetrator and seek to understand his 'mistaken' actions. We weigh up the consequences of penalty on his future potential, and look for his redeeming attributes.
3. Finally, we don't ask Leda to respond herself – in fact everyone else responds by representing her story from their own perspectives. Both language and imagery (mis)represent the woman, the perpetrator, and the rape. There is power in self-representing and there is a different sort of power held in representing for 'others'.

Yeats final poem Leda and the Swan (reproduced in part at the beginning of this chapter) was written in 1928. It acknowledges the rape of Leda with language that references a 'great blow', her helplessness and terror, and questions the great god's power upon her, yet still suggests her complicity in this 'seduction' as her thighs are first 'caressed' and later described as 'loosening'. Discussing Yeats use of Leda's 'encounter' to question the ambiguities of the 'sexual act', Barnwell (1977) goes as far as to explore the possibility that in fact Leda has placed herself into this violent context for the express purpose of entrapping the god, who then "cannot *not* attempt an assault upon her" (p.63), believing that the poem offers insight into humanity's complex yet limited vision of its own often violent sexuality.

Leda and the Swan is a myth but what Leda represents is not – rape is a devastating reality for more than a quarter of New Zealand women (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012). Cavalier classical western perspectives on rape have historically encouraged a culture of male aggressiveness and female compliance, which have laid the framework for a wider

acceptance of gender based violence. These discourses can be seen through the languages of literature and visual art. The Classical and biblical attitudes which informed mediaeval art and texts demonstrate rape as a minor breach of chivalry (Walker, 2015), closely linked to seduction. Discourses such as these, often born out of myths like that of Leda, cannot be considered as neutral but must be understood as carrying material consequences. For example, an Amnesty International public survey on rape undertaken in 2005 exposed some common myths held about rape victims, many closely paralleling the ancient Leda myths. Both genders were notably recorded in expressing these attitudes.

1) She asked for it – she was out late, alone, flirting, drunk and / or dressed inappropriately (in Leda's case she was naked and possibly alone by the river)
2) She didn't fight back – she had no serious injuries (that we could see), she didn't report this immediately and when she did she didn't cry or appear distressed (Leda is overwhelmingly portrayed as passive, compliant, overtly sexually available, and encouraging. To top this off she does not 'put it right' by killing herself from the shame she should have felt – which therefore probably means she is complicit).
3) Her allegations may be false, and deliberately fabricated to extricate her from a difficult situation, to cover up, or retaliate, for financial gain, sympathy, or as a sign of mental illness (Leda is not generally portrayed as alleging rape against Zeus. Due to common knowledge of the myth we understand that she was raped by Zeus, however the imagery of her compliance effectively demonstrates that the rape was in fact consensual sex, which Leda openly sought).

To place this within an Aotearoa New Zealand context, rape within marriage was only criminalised in this country in 1985 and there remain attitudes that sexual assault by a partner is not as serious as rape by a stranger. Statistics taken in 2005 demonstrate that around 38% of sexual offences against Aotearoa New Zealand women were perpetuated by a current or ex intimate partner (Families Commission, 2009). The reality is that sexual violence within an intimate relationship is less likely to be reported to police or disclosed to other support services than other forms of violence, and women are 10 times more likely to sustain multiple sexual assaults than women raped by strangers (Ministry of Women's

Affairs, 2012). Sadly these perspectives are widely reflected in our society, with specific funding for sexual assault separated out from that of other forms of violence, which commonly include sexual assault as part of a wider range of oppressive practices and acts upon women.

The insidious nature of violence often makes it difficult to see, difficult to explain, and difficult to protest against or even for others to notice (Sims, 2008). To understand these 'different' experiences we develop common stories, understandings, stereotypes, or 'myths'. Myths and stereotypes are dangerous if they misrepresent, or legitimate oppressive ways of seeing and responding to people. Many stereotypes sit around who we are as women who have experienced violence. Very few of them are positive. We are overwhelmingly represented as damaged, injured, disabled, disordered, vulnerable, broken, suicidal, angry, numb, 'just as bad' as the perpetrator, as bad mothers, at least partly to blame, as uneducated, unbalanced, difficult, incompetent, helpless, mentally unwell, and in need of help. We are seen as 'victims' with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and research commonly records us as ashamed, depressed, hypervigilant, anxious, guilty, self-blaming, fearful, and passive. We are seen as more likely to have poor health behaviours; to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs and greater quantities of pain medication, and have sexually transmitted diseases (Beck, McNiff, Clapp, Olsen, Avery and Hagewood, 2011; Breggin, 2015; Houry, Kaslow, and Thompson, 2005; Jaquier and Sullivan, 2014: Kuijpers, van der Knaap, and Winkel, 2012; Moulding, Buchanan, and Wendt, 2015; Siegel, Golding, Stein, Burnam and Sorenson, 1990; Sippel and Marshall, 2011; Winlow, 2014; Wong and Mellor, 2014). The impacts of men's violence against women, or IPV, are documented in many scientific and clinical themes based around our 'emotions' and reactions, and these include the health consequences of the violence on us and the economy (Heyman, Slep and Foran, 2015).

Our responses to this violence, our resistance, and the positive attributes we demonstrate are conveniently not commonly discussed. Is it any wonder that we are identified as having

'low self-esteem' or that we 'feel sad' if these stereotypes are how we are represented and responded to? Comments such as: "research on assault and depression indicates that as many as 80% of assaulted women feel depressed after being raped" (Siegel et al, 1990, p.230); "repeat victimisation over the lifespan appears to be the norm rather than the exception for women victims of IPV" (Jaquier and Sullivan. 2014, p.210) ; and "all victims of IPV should receive a mental health referral"(Houry et al, 2005, p. 1468) are significantly representative of the negative ways we are viewed and responded to. Tellingly, Chung (2016) identifies that 87% of mental health diagnoses in Australia occur after violence, as practitioners overwhelmingly take an effects based perspective, identifying 'negative' emotional responses as mental health abnormalities in individuals, while ignoring the social and material contexts these responses occur within. In seeking to identify and correct these perceived 'abnormalities' the pathologising status quo of entrenched mental health discourses is reinforced and people responses are medicalised (Bratt and Johnson, 2017).

The patriarchy hidden behind dominant female portrayals also allocates responsibility to victims for their own distress, demonstrating a cultural bias which analyses and classifies behaviour yet fails to analyse social context, social responses and resistance (Wade, 2013). While the construction of a 'victim discourse' in the 1970's positively ensured that public empathy was roused and assistance was made available to women experiencing violence, it also laid a foundation which entrenched the concept of female helplessness (Walker, 1980). Being unable or unwilling to help oneself infers 'victim' responsibility and reinforces discourses of passivity, victim blaming, and disassociation, which require 'professional help'. If we become accustomed to continually hearing representations made of us that demean and diminish, we may even begin to account for ourselves in this way, utilising the expected language of dominant medical discourses to describe our own dysfunction and deficit (Stickley, 2012).

The influence of literature, art, and visual culture over social behavior – the language we use and the representations we make of Leda and many other women, excuse and legitimate

gender-based violence. Stories are a cultural way of learning acceptable behaviours, and warning systems for us – they are producers of knowledge. So what do we learn from Leda's story? Rape is inevitable; women are malleable, and easily coerced, objectified, and controlled, really they want it – if the persuasion is strong enough. Indeed, Adams (1964, p. 54) goes as far as to comment on "the mystery of women's passive pleasure in being violated". We also learn that the rapist can separate himself from the act, can excuse his animal nature as outside of himself, and can dominate through brute strength. And others will support him in these excuses – blaming his lack of control not on autonomous choice but instead on uncontrollable urges, difficulty understanding social cues, difference; and misreading his violent act as erotic, romantic, or the result of an out of character temporary loss of control brought on by external factors such as alcohol. Perpetrator sentencing also reflects a high rate of attribution to non-violent causes, and the language used often continues to obfuscate rape as sexualised consensual acts of 'fondling', 'touching', 'kissing', and 'intercourse'. The victim herself is often portrayed as responsible, as in Leda's case, for insufficient resistance to this violence, if in fact the assault is even viewed as violent - as sexual assault is often seen as distinct from violence (Coates, 1997; Coates, Beavin Bavelas, and Gibson, 1994).

Meyer (2016) suggests that victims of IPV also do not meet the criteria of the 'ideal' victim - a concept introduced by Nils Christie in 1986. Christie argues that victims were required to be seen as weak, innocent, and vulnerable. They must have been involved in a respectable activity at the time of attack, and be blamelessly victimised by a big, bad, and unknown, offender. In meeting these criteria the 'victim' is then perceived as someone worthy of our support and empathy. Victims of men's violence often fall short of this ideal victim status – they may know their abuser and have a personal relationship with them - and therefore are often seen as at least partially to blame for their victimisation. The effect of this construction on the victim ensures that they must attempt to redeem themselves to be seen as worthy of support and empathy. The underlying assumptions are that the victim must reconsider the choices and behaviours that led them to be abused – intimating that they are at least partly accountable for provoking the abuse, for not trying hard enough to

make the relationship work, and for remaining in the relationship - they are therefore complicit. Nowhere in these common ideologies of the 'victim' do we ask how she responded, nor do we acknowledge her resistance to the violation and indignity she has suffered. At the very best we acknowledge the effects on her, we pity and 'help' her.

Walker (2015) notes the increasing acknowledgement of violence against women as a crime of power, and the more common twentieth century portrayal of this violence through literature (and I would add art) as bald, shocking, and close to actual experience. This confrontational shift can clearly be seen in the 1973 work of artist Ana Mendieta who used her own body to create a series of simulated rape scenes, including one in her apartment [figure 8] which viewers were unknowingly invited to attend. This performance work was Mendieta's response to the highly publicised brutal rape and murder of student Sara Ann Otten which took place on an Iowa university campus in the United States – Mendieta's adopted homeland (Rosenthal, 2013).

Figure 8: Mendieta, Ana (Cuban-American sculptor and performance artist, 1948-1985). (1973, Image: 1973, 20th C.). *Documentation of Rape Scene, Documentation in a series of 35mm images of a staged rape*. Retrieved from http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/asset/HKANSAS__1148_21819780FIGURE 9

In the first of a year-long series of works addressing violence against women, Mendieta was tied to a table, semi-naked, with cows blood smeared across her body. Broken plates lay on the floor, cigarette butts were in ashtrays, and blood was found in the toilet bowl – scene details that were reported about Sara Ann Otten's rape and murder in the press.

Viso & Mendieta (2004) describe this performance work as one that "communicated the horror of a humiliating assault upon a woman's body and psyche" (p.155), however Rosenthal (2013) also notes the challenging social critique and theatrical drama of the work, and observes that "feminist writers have pointed out that by making herself the object of both violence and the gaze, Mendieta complicates any simplistic idea of female victimhood" (p.152).

Figure 9: Titian, (1571). *Tarquin and Lucretia*. [Oil on canvas]. Retrieved from http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/collection_pages/italy_pages/914/FRM_PIC_SE-914.html

The long history of this discourse of shame and the focus on the effects of violence on 'victims' are clearly demonstrated in visual representations of another myth – that of the 'chaste wife' Lucretia. Lucretia committed suicide after she was coerced and then raped in her bed by Tarquin (a guest in her home) and had confessed this 'failure' to her husband. Romanticised as a true heroine for her honorable response to this violation, Lucretia is portrayed as a model of feminine purity and virtue, with an unquestioned loyalty to her husband.

Lucretia is perceived as an 'actual victim' (eg: she is not portrayed as complicit) in the majority of the representations made of her. Images show her held forcefully, threatened, or bound, preventing her escape. She is clearly attempting to fend off her abuser [figures 9 & 10].The portraits of her suicide demonstrate the terrible effect that this rape had on both

her and her family [figure 11], and reinforce the concept that as a woman 'damaged' by rape she could not live without bringing terrible shame upon her husband, family and herself.

Figure 10: Tintoretto, 1518-1594. *Violence of Tarquin*. [Painting, 1.88x2.71m]. Retrieved from http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/asset/ARTSTOR_103_41822000640399

The shame which led to Lucretia's suicide should been attributed to her rapist Tarquin, but Lucretia accepts it as her own and pays the social consequences so that her husband and family do not have to. It is interesting to note that in many of the portraits of Lucretia's rape she is represented as actively physically resisting, and the rape is portrayed as unwanted and violent, however her naked body remains exposed to the viewer, even in the traumatic rendering of her death [figure 11]. The titles of some of the works – for example that of Tintoretto (above) entitled the *Violence of Tarquin*, denote this overt difference in understanding, making the perpetrator's shame, not the victim's, visible. These works offer a stark contrast to the portraits of Leda, who did not kill herself from shame, and who is overwhelmingly portrayed as complicit in a sexual encounter. The titles of the majority of

the titles of art works produced in response to this myth often simply refer to *Leda and the Swan*.

Figure 11: Hamilton, G. (1763 to 1767). *The Death of Lucretia, The Oath of Brutus*. [Painting, 213.4 x 264.2 cm]. Retrieved from http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/asset/AYCBAIG_10313608235

It can be said then that images are never neutral. They hold the potential to both exert power and act as instruments of power and can sustain and legitimate ideological violence. hooks (1995) describes representation as "a crucial location of struggle for any exploited and oppressed people asserting subjectivity and decolonisation of the mind"(p.3). Surrounding us in modern culture, imagery in photographs, visual art, film and television are constructed representations, not replications, of the real (Bell, 1992; Sturken and Cartwright, 2001).

Visual representations are reflective of the wider social context in which they occur. The way that people are represented depends on the way that they are viewed within society, and on who is doing both the viewing and the representing. The perspectives which inform this dialogue are often coloured by stereotypes and a lack of knowledge about 'others'. Representations on behalf of groups may assume commonality, fix identity, and reproduce their marginality; simplifying, distorting and even doing injury to meaning (Dyer, 2002; Ross and Lester, 2011). Images possess a seductive power to confirm our belief that we somehow 'know' those portrayed (Berger, 1977).

Throughout the history of art women, like Leda, have been portrayed as a sexual and maternal dichotomy (Ross and Lester, 2011); as compliant and take-able, visually submissive to the possessive power of the dominant male gaze. The bodies of women were, and often still are, represented in ways that unquestioningly violate, offering them up to the spectator (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001). Berger explains this dynamic with the phrase "men act and women appear" (1977, p.47). This oppressive dichotomy, which activates men and subdues women, is linked it to a wider framework of binary oppositions of race, ability, ethnicity, and gender (Evans & Hall, 1999) and is clearly demonstrated in the representations made of both Leda and Lucretia.

Up until the 1970's visual representation of abused women was rare in the public arena – men's violence and abuse against women were not discussed, or if they were it was from a medical or clinical perspective. What went on in the privacy of people's homes stayed there (Adams, 2012), although passive, acceptable, forms of abuse, such as those discussed in Figure 1, were entrenched in society and were therefore 'not seen' as abusive (rape appears to be the exception, with portrayals of this type of 'acceptable' or unrecognised violence routinely recorded across time).

The representation of abused women in society is now most commonly seen in the mass media; on television broadcasts, on the internet, in domestic violence literature, advertising

campaigns, or newspaper reports. Worryingly, in light of the broad and complex range of psychological and emotional abuse noted in the research of gender based violence, women (if they are even seen in advertising campaigns) may be portrayed as physically abused, a fact which minimises the impact of the non-physical violence experienced and further marginalises 'victims' (Sims, 2008). Media (even those working to prevent family violence) who show abused women typically show or infer physical violence occurring [figure 12]. Even though the woman in this television advertisement is not obviously physically injured her movements are painful and slow and traces of bruising may be intimated by the expression on her face. There is a definite indication that this woman has been physically abused.

Figure 12*:* (2012). *Family Violence It's Not OK*. [Digital Media]. Retrieved from http://www.areyouok.org.nz/

An overwhelming media focus upon the more easily identified forms of violence, those that leave readily apparent bruising and injury, has not gone totally unremarked by contemporary researchers. For instance, Cismaru, Jensen, and Lavack, in the conclusions to their 2010 study of twelve domestic violence campaigns, include recommendations that depictions of abuse should be broadened to include verbal and emotional abuse, and that signs of abuse should be given in far greater detail. These authors also commented upon the

lack of any distinct theoretical underpinning to most of the campaigns studied, noting in addition the often contradictory nature of many. Sims (2008) supports their views in arguing for the explicit inclusion of emotional abuse as a form of domestic violence in media reports. Seen as a crucial disseminator of information in contemporary society, Sims suggests that such explicit media exposure could offer women a more readily accessible way of identifying this insidious form of abuse. Physical, observable damage and control are readily seen and understood and in contemporary society are clearly viewed as inappropriate, but emotional, psychological and spiritual harm is more difficult to understand or define, even for the 'victim' herself. Its damage is intangible, unseen and often inexpressible. Sims (2008) describes the invisible and traumatic nature of this emotional wounding effectively; "a police report cannot be filed for a "stolen self" or a "broken self-esteem" and a picture cannot be taken of a "bruised and battered soul" (p.377).

In a 2011 report, following on from their earlier work, Cismaru and Lavack discuss the efficacy of 16 campaigns aimed at perpetrators, and comment on the extensive formative research done prior to the implementation of the "It's not OK" New Zealand Government Campaign (Ministry of Social Development, 2018). In responding to this work they recommend that theory be more explicitly used to guide the campaign and also be used as the basis for gauging its success. While agreeing with these authors in their argument that a robust theoretical underpinning is crucial to any work of this kind, it must also be acknowledged that this in itself will not guarantee freedom from bias, especially if the campaign is entirely constructed internal to an organisation or agency dependent upon perceived success for ongoing funding and/or survival.

Other research has offered a somewhat critical view of contemporary violence prevention campaigns. For example, two of the participants in Walton's (2012) research commented that they were dissatisfied with current public awareness campaigns. One woman spoke about the fact that she did not feel that the current 'It's Not OK' campaign was

representative of women in her position. Another woman stated that this campaign "focused on stereotypical victims of IPV, while not effectively explaining what IPV actually is" (p. 91). West's (2013) research with 10 focus groups of female 'IPV survivors' concurs. It was found that these women viewed intimate partner violence campaigns in the United States as "emotionally harmful, inaccurate, and misleading" (p.195), with many believing they "do more harm than good for the audience most severely affected by this issue" (p. 195), distorting public perception of men's violence against women to the extent that the graphic and demeaning advertising representations are perceived as reality. For the 'victims' and 'survivors' of this violence these campaigns enhanced and reinforced conceptions of blame, shame, anger, degradation and victimisation. One respondent commented "how dare you represent me in this way. That's not me and the whole concept is insulting and stereotypical. Haven't we progressed beyond this?" (p.202). These comments draw attention to the long held view of feminist researchers in the area of gender based violence who argue strongly that the lived experiences of women who have experienced men's violence will always provide the most intimate, representative understanding.

This is a view echoed by The World Health Organisation (2005) in confirming that the media could play a bigger role in fighting violence; viewing the lack of women represented and the way that they are represented (often as victims or family members) as indicative of the male dominated field of journalism. A global survey of women's participation in the media indicates the need for change in the way women participate and are portrayed in the media. When reporting violence against women the Global Media Monitoring Project notes that 64% of reporters and experts are recorded as male, resulting in what is described as a distorted image of women. The representation of this group by those outside of it relates strongly to ideological constructs of women, abuse, homes and families, telling us more about the producers' own culture than their subjects (Global Media Monitoring Project, in Macharia, O'Connor & Ndangam, 2010). This systematic bias correlates with McManus and Dorfman's (2005) assessment of a feminist critique of intimate violence reporting which notes the inferior media coverage gender based violence receives. This bias was discussed as often relative to a lack of understanding of this violence, and was seen to be related to

ingrained perspectives that it is a 'women's issue' and is a private rather than a public problem. The ongoing focus on homicide, or abuse against and by public figures, as the newsworthy face of gender based violence is seen by the authors as a serious failure of representation on the part of the media. The representation of issues and incidents involving men's violence is seen by Carlyle, Slator and Chakroff (2008) as having important implications for policy development and as influential in guiding "beliefs and perceptions regarding norms of acceptable behaviour within intimate relationships" (p.168). Their study concludes that the effects of newspaper coverage on public attitudes toward 'victims' should be part of future research.

Self-representation – the chance to speak for ourselves, instead of having people speak for, to, or about us is one that is not often afforded women who have experienced violence, yet Jury (2009) notes the "taken for granted understanding that the most authoritive and authentic experience of abuse would come from women who have been abused" (p.39). If we are to acknowledge the realities of women who are experiencing abuse, and educate and alert those who may identify and assist, then these authentic experiences are vital to media and education campaigns.

Feminism and decolonising discourses have opened up dialogue around many such hidden topics, critiquing and effecting the representation of many different women. Artists have responded by creating works which directly oppose the dominant western male spectator, and explore women's lived experiences of violence in society, viewing the personal as political through imagery, and effecting social transformation in the process. Giving an influential aesthetic form to political discourse, women's art has marked moments of protest, demanded political change and offered pointed insights into the oppressive, personal realities of their marginality.

While the media may act as a weapon of ongoing oppression it has also been used as a tool for social change by artists. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz's 1977 performance work *In*

Mourning and in Rage [figure 13] acted as a powerful protest against the Los Angeles media's sensationalised coverage of a series of rape-related murders.

Figure 13*:* Lacy, S., and Labowitz, L. (1977). *In Mourning and in Rage*. [Photograph of Performance].
In Reckitt, H., Ed. (2001). *Art and Feminism.* New York: Phaidon.

Acting as both a memorial and a public action, the work highlighted the media's provocative attitudes and their exploitation of women's fear and vulnerability around this concern. The absence of reported access to support services, to discussion forums or any other forms of empowerment was addressed by a series of women dressed in black garments symbolising mourning. Seven feet high, these costumed performers created a dominant presence; their red shawls spoke of both anger and pain. The artists not only presented the work in a public event, as part of a city-wide protest against violence towards women, they also rallied local council officials and many others, electing a swift turnaround in media attitudes and behaviours (Reckitt & Phelan, 2012).

In another example of feminist artists challenging institutionalised racism and sexism, the work of an anonymous group of women artists who called themselves 'The Guerilla Girls' utilised graphic media materials and tactics; posters, cards, flyers, and on-the-street advertising, in a series of sustained feminist campaigns. Their early 1980's works addressed entrenched patriarchal prejudice in public and private art institutions, however later 1990's works addressed wider issues of social injustice, including a 1992 public service message [figure 14] outlining documented 1988 rape and conviction statistics in the United States of America (Guerilla Girls,1995; Guerilla Girls, 1998).

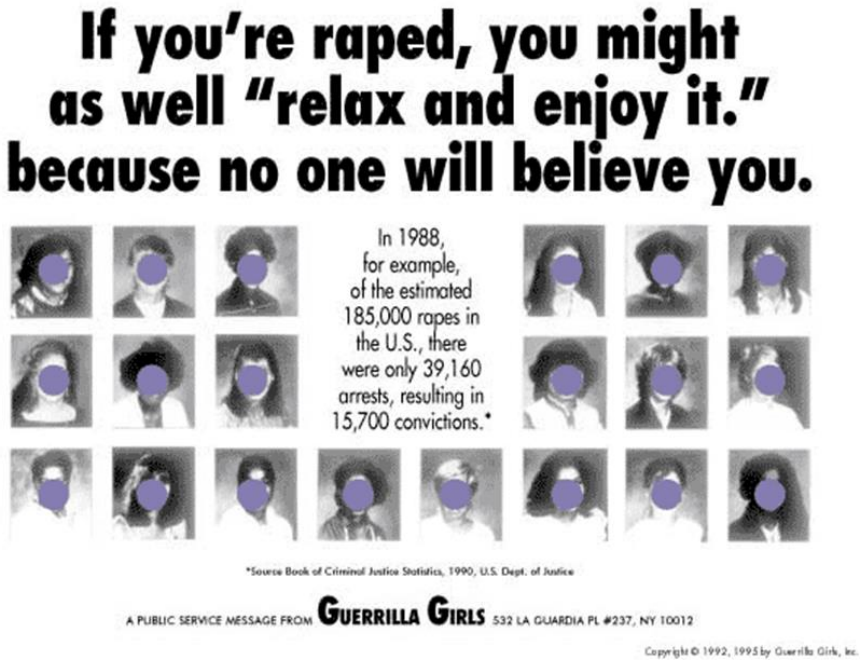


Figure 14*:* Guerilla Girls. (1992).*What to do when raped*. [Poster]. Retrieved from http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/rape.shtml

The representation of women's issues by feminists and artists permitted a specific discourse to develop around violence against women. In developing this discourse, women as 'victims' of violence were identified and public empathy was roused in the effort to create awareness and change. Specific representation about violence by those who had experienced it was also now given a place in the public domain. In Aotearoa, Bridie Lonie's 1980 installation piece *Untitled* [figure 15] featured in a Women and Violence exhibition which took place in the newly established Wellington Women's Gallery. Lonie describes this work as confronting

her experience of domestic violence. A clay figure which appears to be that of a couple engaged in a sexual act is in fact that of a man strangling a woman. It is placed before a wall of photocopies of men and women's hands in various stages of affection and anger. Lonie described this work as one which spoke for her experience but not for "women who have children and live in economic dependence upon their violent men" (Evans, Lonie and Lloyd, 1988, p.170).

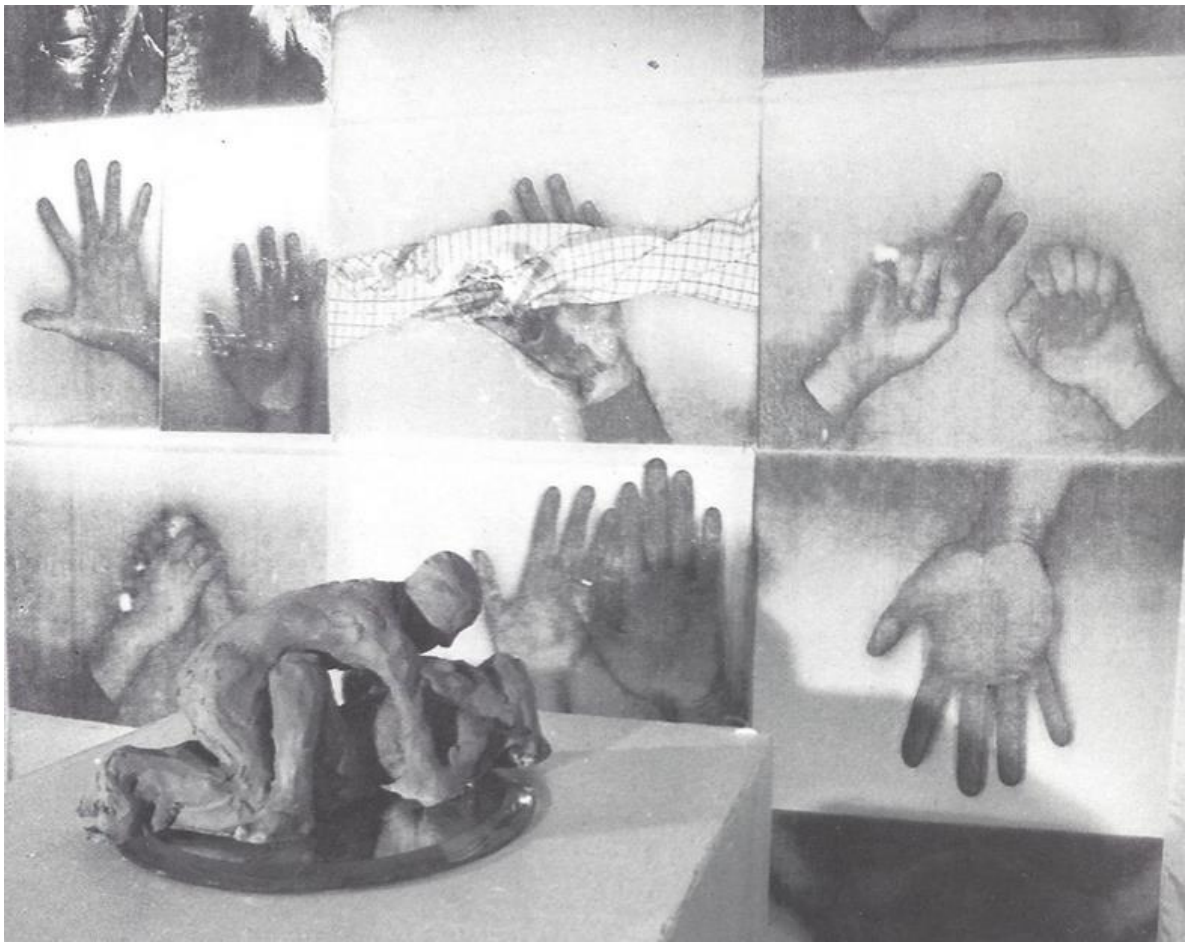


Figure 15*:* Lonie, B. (1980). *Untitled.* [Installation].
In Evans, M., Lonie, B., and Lloyd, T,. (Eds). (1988). *A Women's Picture Book 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa (New Zealand).* Wellington: Government Printing Office

This distinction is important as Lonie not only acknowledge the individuality of her experience and her self-representation of this, she also notes that other women experience violence differently and that her work does not speak for them. Jagger and Rothenberg (1993) denote the importance of this difference between women – although a sense of solidarity is cited. Difference within this group is as important as difference between any

other groups in society. The feminist emphasis placed on 'sisterhood' was seen to contribute to a sense of ethnocentrism which did not consider the contrasts between women's situations, specifically those of indigenous and non-indigenous women in post-colonial societies. Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p.166) notes the challenge these 'other' women have made to the assumptions of universal characteristics and oppressions described by "predominately white, Western-trained women academics". Indigenous women artists are therefore not only tasked with resisting stereotypes of gender, but also those of race in a white patriarchal society.

In extending this argument, Green & Green (2007) note that the feminist slogan "the personal is political", becomes something else for Māori women: "the personal is political, the personal is collective, the collective is political" (p.182). This representation can be understood in Shona Rapira Davies work *Ma te wāhine ka tupu ai te hanga nei, te tangata, ma te whenua kawhai opanga ai/ Woman found raped, wrapped in a threadbare cloak** [again – this image is not represented in this text out of respect for the artist's wishes], a performance/ sculpture installation of a naked and prone woman's figure which took place at the Govett-Brewster Gallery, and which marked the 1983 Māori Women's Welfare League Conference.

This work addresses the subject of violence against women but also draws in connections with a wider collective of lands and people. Rapira Davies laid hand-made and painted tiles onto a bed of sand taken from the beaches of the Taranaki area. Elements of both Māori carving and European painting covered the tiles. Her performance involved the construction of the clay figure of the 'woman found raped' onto these tiles. Larger than life-size the unfired work had manuka hoops placed over it, referencing "the sacredness of papatuanuku" (Rapira Davies cited in Sotheran, 1987, p.46). Allowed to deteriorate, crack, and potentially crumble the effect of the environment on the clay body was a planned and expressive narrative which Sotheran believes reflected the cross-cultural position Rapira Davies occupied at the time of writing.

Despite the action and activism of female artists, and the more open transmission of our stories through art and literature, the attitudes and stereotypes which remain around women who have experienced violence continue to impact on the power we have to represent ourselves. Sharing narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. Research backs this: Hogan (2012) discusses the difficulty of women sharing their narratives of abuse with friends and family or wider society and acknowledge the unbearable weight of pain and disgust these narratives may cause others. The difficulty of voicing experiences of violence is also acknowledged by Jury (2009) and Walton (2012). The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence. The language which sits around violence holds such an emotionally meaningless weight that it fails miserably in capturing our lived realities. For example: the word “rape” can never portray the reality of being raped.

Representing ourselves offers us the opportunity to transform the way we are seen and understood by those outside of our experiences, and to reclaim our bodies, our identities, our autonomy, and our dignity. The alternative to self-representation is often silence - because it offers us the autonomy to accept or refuse specific subject positionings inherent in the discourses of violence and representation. Not saying things can be a form of resistance, a way of protecting the safety of the personal experience which we ourselves own, and of refusing to engage in dialogue which continues to repress and marginalise us (Morgan & Coomes, 2001). Silence for Māori (who believe that language has its own spiritual essence) may also be a highly valued space for the divulgence of more than words alone can speak. Conventional western language may not offer the necessary expression and may actually work against this, threatening less ‘rational’ understandings of things in the world (Mika, 2012; Mika, 2015). If those who know abuse and oppression so intimately must take the subject position of silence then violence will continue.

To challenge these prescribed collective identities we must have the opportunity to call them into question and to offer our own alternatives (Dunn, 2005). Our authentic voices self-representing these experiences, our responses to them, and our identities, offer the best opportunity for change. Acting as a voice for these silenced and suppressed stories, art offers the potential to subvert and re-represent – asking the viewer to see me and hear me from my perspective. Nina Mariette (1997) effectively describes this in the way her painting acts as a powerful agent for her own experience of sexual violence as a child "naming it and owning it in a way nothing else has come close to" (p.9).

This section has presented an argument for self-representation and demonstrated why this is a key component of the WAI kaupapa. Self-representation offers collective members a way to challenge many of the myths and stereotypes that sit around who we are because of what we have experienced. In self-representing we can express alternative narratives that are individual, personal, cultural, deeply connected to our identities and to our many different ways of being in the world. The visual responses we make also challenge a long history of outsider artists' representations of 'victims' of violence, and this is exemplified in the many portrayals of the myths of Leda and Lucretia. The way we choose to represent ourselves through our art making offers a very necessary, socially active, and often unheard voice both within the 'helping' professions and the world of art.

PART TWO: WAI key tenets

This section discusses the key tenets that the WAI kaupapa (philosophy) embraces. Importantly the approach outlined opens a safe space for women to self-represent their identities and experiences in ways that do not further demean, pathologise, expose or disempower them. Working in this very specific way facilitates a different conversation around violence against women. Response Based Practice, with its critical understandings of language, social responses, resistance to violence and upholding dignity within the discourse of violence, is crucial to the WAI kaupapa. Key concepts of resistance, dignity, 'being', art making, collective action and insider facilitation are also described separately, within this section, to allow clarity around the way that they are integrated and understood within the WAI context.

Response Based Practice

Response Based Practice (RBP) is a way of responding to victims of violence (Centre for Response Based Practice, 2017). Developed by a group of Canadian family therapists and academics, RBP strongly underpins our WAI kaupapa because it challenges entrenched ways of responding to 'victims of violence', offering a very different approach.

Response Based Practice focuses on four key areas.

1. The way that Language is used to:

Hide or reveal violence

Hide or reveal victim responses and resistance

Confuse or make clear the perpetrator's responsibility

Blame and pathologise, or challenge the blaming and pathologising, of victims

2. Social Responses not Effects

Effects based ideas are that 'victims' "ask for it" or are attracted to the violence because of psychological problems or their history. The perpetrator and 'victim' are believed to be passive, and the problem is seen to be in the 'victims' head.

Response based ideas are that 'victims' of violence prefer to be treated with respect and kindness. Both the victim and the perpetrator are active and make decisions. The violence exists in the social world, in a context, and between people. Understanding both the negative and positive social responses to 'victims', and also 'victims' responses to these social responses is key. Language, social interaction and social context all feed into this understanding.

3. Acknowledging Resistance to violence

"Whenever people are treated badly, they always resist" (Wade, 1997, p.23). People tend not to notice that victims resist violence. Perpetrators of violence know that victims will resist so they make plans to stop the victim from resisting. Violent and abusive behaviour is done deliberately.

Acknowledging our resistance, however subtle, acknowledge and upholds our dignity. Resistance may be very small, and sometimes may take place only within the safety of the mind, but it is always present.

4. Upholding Dignity

Dignity is related to social esteem, mana, self-worth, self-determination, inclusion, respect, manaakitanga (an ethic of care), and mental and physical wellbeing.

(Wade, 2013).

Often the social responses that we receive to our disclosures of violence are overwhelmingly negative, effects based, and 'victim blaming'. Those responding (and this may often include 'professionals' or those mandated with 'helping us') may even ascribe responsibility to us for our own oppression, and excuse and legitimate the perpetrators decisions to use violence. Being seen and responded to in these negative ways impacts on our dignity and effectively ensures that we remain silent to reduce further risk of being shamed.

RBP offers a very different way of responding to 'victims of violence'. It is a way of practicing that gets out of people's minds and into their worlds, it looks for relationships between people, and with the land, de-individualising mental health issues and repositioning them as contextual responses, with the understanding that "Ït is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society" (Bratt & Johnson, 2017).

RBP has offered WAI an anti-oppressive way of framing our understandings, and clarifying our knowledge. In the WAI context RBP is one of many threads that surrounds and protects those who work within this kaupapa – but it is a strong thread. The way WAI functions, as a social justice art making collective, shifts more conventional one-on-one ways of working with this practice. In the WAI setting RBP is not used to verbally unpack individual narratives of violence, instead it grounds our way of working and thinking as a collective. RBP allows us to focus on language, social responses, and our resistance, in direct response to our representation. Thinking about and shifting our personal narratives in response to this kōrero (discussion) is often an underground process, which appears through our art making. RBP is powerfully present, it influences our ways of thinking and interacting, and our ways of representing ourselves through our art work, but it is not used by WAI as a counselling or therapeutic tool. RBP offers a way of working that is respectful, dignifying and mindful of power relations. As a way of working with victims of violence RBP challenges and shifts many deeply entrenched narratives, discourses, and approaches, however it must be noted that in conventional applications of this practice there will still remain the difficult negotiation of power between the RBP practitioner and client, no matter how aware and

well intentioned both parties are. This power differential comes from both sides too – as 'victims' we often buy into narratives that we need the help professionals can give us, so we cede power in order to buy it back later. The way that WAI applies RBP as an understanding or underpinning to our kaupapa is our best attempt to respect those who form our collective, and to minimise inequitable power relations.

Resistance

Figure 16: Gericault, T. (early 1800s). *Leda and the Swan.* [black crayon, sepia wash, and blue watercolor with white gouache wash on brown paper]. Retrieved from http://www.en.utexas.edu/amlit/amlitprivate/texts/leda.htm

Leda and the Swan [figure 16] painted by Gericault in 1780 is one of the few early examples of the myth of Leda where she is portrayed as actively attempting to stop Zeus raping her. Her hand is strongly positioned against the approach of the swan, her arm muscles are flexed, her knee forms a barrier, and her face is dark with anger at his attack. She appears strong and in charge of her body. Medlicott (1970) views this as one of the few paintings of

the myth in which the swan is seen to be threatening or forceful in any way, yet he still states that “in no portrayal (including that by Gericault with his aggressive swan) is Leda resisting” (p. 19).

Resistance as a subtle or covert response through a range of psychological and social tactics is often not ever asked about or acknowledged when responding to ’victims of violence’, yet when open defiance is just too dangerous Wade (2007) identifies that indirect, subversive, and small acts of resistance will almost always occur. Minute control of a person’s movements or features, and other such tiny acts of resistance can throw up a shield between the ‘victim’ and perpetrator - and offer a space where autonomy and self-protection can exist. Every tiny act of resistance is a fight for identity and for dignity, but if we ignore these responses because they are not big enough or don’t stop the violence then we ignore the humanity of the person who is desperately trying to assert themselves. It is interesting to note that even some feminist authors take the perspective that resistance must be a physical reaction to violence – shouting, physical struggle – the stuff of self-defense training (Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014) or physical combat. If we reduce the significance of resistance only to overt reaction then we exclude most forms of resistance (Wade, 1997) and conceal the complex and interconnected meanings that are constructed (Natividad, 2014). Wade (1997, p.25) proposes that

> Any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any type of disrespect), or the conditions that make such acts possible, may be understood as a form of resistance. Further, any attempt to imagine or establish a life based on respect or equality, on behalf of one’s self or others, including any effort to redress the harm caused by violence or other form of oppression, represents a de facto form of resistance.

Often something very personal, resistance is intimately related to the individual and their particular social context. Those outside of this space may not ever see it or understand that what we are doing is resisting violence. Resistance can be screaming, pushing and physical fighting but more often it is far more subtle. It may be as simple as hiding the car keys so that they can't be taken from you, ignoring abusive comments so that they don't escalate into other forms of violence, or wearing layers of clothes to bed to make it harder for an abuser to access your body. Women and children resist men's control of them in so many ways. This resistance allows us dignity and autonomy. We make choices that resist violence, we make choices that keep us safe and protect others. Resistance is complex and intricately related to the nuances of the violence we are experiencing. We are experts at responding to those who inflict violence, because we have to be.

Seeing resistance to violence may not be the viewers' first response to Gail Potocki's painting *Leda* [figure 6] at the start of this chapter– indeed, Leda is naked and appears to lie passively beneath the aggressive attack of the swan, reflecting so many other common portrayals of this myth. She is not screaming, or fighting, and she appears calm and aware. Taken at face value we would assume she is consensual or complicit in this act. If we look carefully, however, we may see her resistance. Leda's eyes look past her attacker, refusing to acknowledge the harm being inflicted upon her, refusing to 'see' him as he degrades and injures her. She appears absent, as though her mind has taken her to a place of protection, far from her body. Her face is relaxed and a smile almost plays upon her lips, as if she knows that he cannot touch the very core of her and therefore he does not have power over her. She is still, perhaps to minimise the damage, and symbolism of his violence is evident in the deep scratches on her cheek and arm, and the mucous-covered, broken shell of the egg she holds. In both colour and texture the inside of this egg refers to that of a vagina after penetration, but Leda holds this symbol away from her as if choosing to separate herself from the violent act, while still holding what is hers. Interestingly the title itself (simply '*Leda'*, rather than '*Leda and the Swan'*) excludes the perpetrator from the narrative, something which is noteworthy when Leda's appearance is marginalised in so many other paintings. Feathers adorn the framing of this event – indicating that Zeus, as the swan and

rapist, lost something also. It must be noted that this analysis is mine and may not be the intended reading by the artist, although Potocki herself comments on the loss of a feather at the moment of pain as a new freedom, and frequently refers to birds within her works in relation to the psychic and the self. In other works the egg has also been represented as "potential knowledge that may or may not come to light" (Negovan, Rose & Solis, 2006, p.59). I respond to this work from the place of my own resistance, and construct understanding in this way, however the artist may have envisioned a very different reading. It is this flexibility and ambiguity that art embraces so well, offering multiple readings and multiple understandings to be constructed from many different perspectives. Good art allows us this space to create our own meaning.

Sadly, the resistance that women consistently demonstrate in response to acts of violence is rarely acknowledged in many of the representations that are made of victims of violence. Often the most positive attributions made to 'victims' or 'survivors' are those of resilience. Existing within sites of racism, sexism, and many other forms of oppression are spaces where the oppressed have been required to demonstrate fortitude, which is frequently identified as resilience. Psychology Today (n.d.) describes resilience as a quality which can hold people together despite adversity, allowing them to rebound successfully from negative experiences. Resilience is often seen as a healthy response to trauma and violence, which can be stronger in some people than others, but which can be developed with practice (Gerity, 2010). However resilience, when used as a term to describe victims responses to violence, may imply that those who are oppressed have bought into the way things are and are doing their best to deal with them and cope – that they are resigned and managing the best they can with the situation. These understandings have given rise to indigenous criticisms of resilience theories because "by definition they assume an acceptance of responsibility for our position as disadvantaged, dispossessed individuals" (Penehira, Green, Tuhiwai Smith and Aspin, 2014, p. 96). If we challenge inequitable distributions of power and actively oppose oppressive forces on us then we cannot simply just be stoically resilient – we fight back, we actively resist the negative impacts on our lives.

No matter how subtle, invisible, or small, resistance is always an active process – and this matters.

Acknowledging resistance to violence, rather than just our resilience, acknowledges agency. It allows 'victims' to see their actions as protective, resourceful, considered, nuanced, and deliberate responses to complex and extreme social contexts. If we do not honour resistance we perpetuate stereotypical discourses of passivity, victim blame, mental instability, and shame which further degrade the dignity of people who have done all they can to protect and defend themselves and others against violence. In this way we uphold their dignity - which is central to human and social functioning and wellbeing (Wade, 2013).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, women have used art making as a political and ideological tool, and a way of resisting cultural, structural, gender-based, and interpersonal violence. From a Māori woman's perspective, Robyn Kahukiwa's paintings reflect overt political activism and her belief that in painting about Māori political issues must be intrinsic. Her paintings address a range of concerns from the representation of Māori Women in her Wāhine Toa series, and the rights of Māori to self-define and self-govern, to identity, living, dying and regeneration, but underpinning it all is Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the 1840 Treaty agreement between Pākehā and Māori. As a mother and grandmother Kahukiwa's concerns also include poverty and violence.

Figure 17: Kahukiwa, R. (2012). *War [After Guernica by Pablo Picasso].* [Painting]. Retrieved from https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-

Clearly seen in the work *War [After Guernica by Pablo Picasso] (2012)* [figure 17], a Māori adaptation of Picasso's 1937 *Guernica* work, the oppressive conditions and effects of colonisation, cultural and interpersonal violence are evident. Kahukiwa's response is to resist through her art-making but also through social media, and practical approaches to social justice and change within her community. She walks, paints, and speaks her resistance (Mason, Mané-Wheoki, White, Borell, Hillary, & Furey, 2014).

Emily Karaka's work also stridently confronts issues of racism, cultural, and social inequity, shifting politics between Māori and Pākehā, and the ongoing colonisation of her people. Alongside Robyn Kahukiwa's work, two decades of Karaka's paintings have directly focused on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. She has been overtly resistant and politically critical throughout her painting career. On a deeply personal level she has also responded to loss, whānau (family), and gender bias against women in the Aotearoa New Zealand Justice system. Her 1983 work *Coming through* [figure 18] offers her challenge to the systemic discourse of violence (Thomas, 1995).

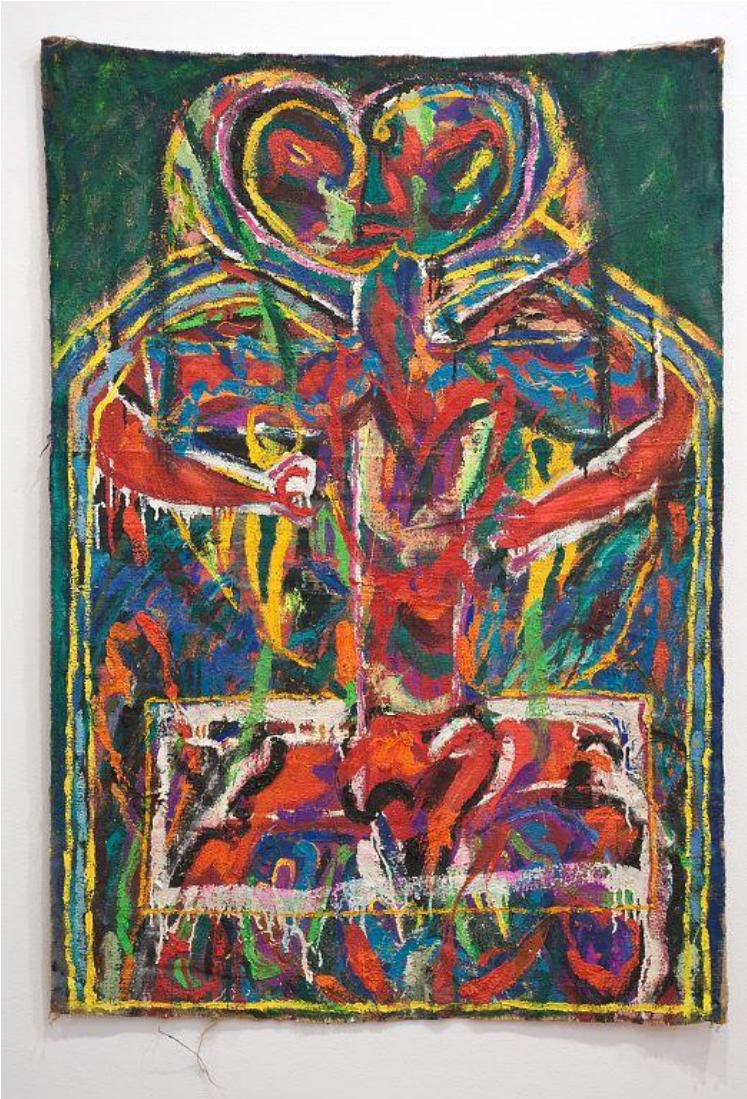


Figure 18: Karaka, E. (1983). *Coming Through.* [Painting] Retrieved from http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artwork/6307/coming-through

Using art as a political tool and "engaging in dialogue means naming and giving voice to experiences of oppression. For people who are oppressed this is an act of resistance" (Fay, 2011, p.72).

Creative resistance is not a new concept for women who have experienced violence – for many of us it has been our way of maintaining our autonomy. Creativity has often been something we have had to fight for as our abusers have understood the link between these acts and our resistance to their violence, and they have attempted to shut down this way of responding. We have had to hide our books, paints, and knitting needles and create subversively. When these acts of suppression have been extreme our creativity has taken place in the only safe space we have left – our minds.

My acts of creative resistance often involved 'day dreaming' and I was regularly accused of being 'away with the fairies' and living in 'la-la land'. When my abuser was away for a (rare) weekend I painted roses on the walls. Bringing beauty to this place of despair and oppression was my fight for my identity, autonomy, and health, and my protection for my children. Creative acts of resistance like these enfolded us, and brought air, light, and soil, into the desolate space one man's violence created. If I had been asked what I did to keep my children safe I could not have named these small, everyday things but they gave me a secret sense of triumph over his violence. Even if I had named these strategies would they have been seen as protective? Now when I look back I see them clearly as creative acts of resistance and nurturing, and they ease the burden of guilt and shame that I have carried with me.

Creativity, if we see it as a form of resistance, takes our understanding beyond limited and stereotypical notions of the inspired individual artist as a genius, with an unusual capacity for unique work – offering a broader way of seeing the creative act. Pope (2005) insists upon a vision of creativity that "embraces radical forms of re-creation and includes actively engaged kinds of re-vision, re-membering and re-familiarisation"(p.xvii) Understanding creativity in this way allows us to re-frame creative acts as thinking processes through which we can understand human relations, power, our histories, and freedom. We then have the potential to re-configure, re-form, re-present, and re-generate – we take back our agency and we resist oppression.

How representations are read, and who is doing the reading, is crucial to the acknowledgement of women's' resistance to violence. In considering Yeats' many drafts of his poem Leda and the Swan, McKenna (2011) offers a vital difference in reading. He suggests that "Yeats found himself fascinated by the possibilities inherent in depictions of resistance in the face of brutality", offering through his final poetic form an ironic commentary "on suffering and transcendence, even as it supports the dignity of resistance" (p.426). Even the poem's original title *the Annunciation* emphasises the unrequested nature of this violence, which cares nothing for Leda's individuality or autonomy, and associates her rape with Mary whose own annunciation robs her "of her status as a person and transforms her into an object of divine worship" (p.432). In analysing Yeats' drafts McKenna understands that Leda resists, discourages, and does not welcome rape, and therefore emerges with her identity intact. He comments that "history, like the swan, will brutalize humanity, but humanity, like Leda, will survive and experience a revelation" (p.441).

Figure 19: Voronkov, A. (1997). *Leda and the Swan.* [Painting]. Retrieved from: https://mithological-nudity.blogspot.co.nz/2014/12/alexander-voronkov-leda-and-

When taken from a feminist, decolonising, and personal perspective the symbolism of Leda for female readers is identified at an intersection of decolonising and sexual politics, and feminist power structures explored in the sonnet. Neigh (2006) suggests that Yeats asks his readers "to imagine how Leda might recover agency and …develop strategies of resistance to colonialism and sexism" (p.147).

Leda's symbolism can be more intimately explored if we understand that "for women, of course, rape is not merely an abstract concept; even if no woman actually fears being violated by a swan" (Sword, 1992, p.306). For women the myth of Leda and the swan serves as a metaphor for real life experiences of male domination and sexual subjugation. If we ignore or minimise Leda's (or anyone else's) resistance we offer further indignity and further marginalisation of experience.

How we read Yeats poem or identify meaning in paintings of Leda and the Swan will be as individual and fluid as identity itself and equally as open to transformation. What is really the key is that it isn't about what we think - it is Leda's story and she is notably "the one who remains silent" (Sword, 1992, p.305) like so many 'victims' of violence - throughout Yeats' poem, through artists' representation of her, and through our reading of her story in art and literature.

Figure 20: Santini, D. (2012). *Metamorphosis.* [Digital image].
Retrieved from: http://derricksantini.com/metamorphosis/

Her voice is only present in its absence. So many works focus on Zeus as the dominant swan - Leda is only present as the compliant or willing victim. What speaks then are her responses – what she did to protect and dignify herself – the way she resisted the attack by Zeus. It is dismaying that the majority of the artistic and literary responses to the rape of Leda (albeit a mythological event) consistently misrepresent the violence, the perpetrator and Leda, even today [figures 16, 17 & 18]. It is notable, that contemporary representations made of Leda by male artists are for the most part consistent with historical representations which romanticise her as complicit, passive, and encouraging [figures 18, 19 & 20], while female artists who represent Leda are far more likely to acknowledge the situation as violent [Figure 6]. I wonder what Leda would say, given an opportunity to speak?

While Leda cannot speak for herself, or for her resistance to the violence she experienced, there are many of us who can. What we say and how we say it offers integrity and authenticity to the discourse of violence, and is the best opportunity to self-represent our resistance and autonomy, and uphold our dignity.

Figure 21: Grun, G. (2006). *Leda et le Cygne*.
[Painting]Retrieved from:
http://miscelaneaspintura19.blogspot.co.nz/2015/07/la-

Dignity

At WAI we focus on our kaupapa and kawa (ways of doing things) as a means of upholding the dignity of all of those involved in our collective. Our emphasis on our proficiency (not our deficiencies) and on presenting ourselves in an affirming, professional way publicly also focus the collective on dignifying ways of working together. Shifting our language also shifts the focus from the effects that the violence has had on us to the responses we have had to it – this Response Based Practice approach acknowledges our resistance and upholds our dignity. As we are all different it matters that we respect other people's experiences and responses, even if we don't always agree with the way they may frame these. WAI is not a place for competing with, or demeaning other people's realities, but it is a place where oppressive framing and stereotypes are challenged.

At WAI our knowledge matters and our responses through art matter. Not just to us but to all of those whose lives we touch through our exhibitions and the publicity around our collective. The WAI 'infusion' (as one collective member puts it) has a way of shifting negativity and challenging deficits - it is positive, respectful, and up front. It is a way of working that takes a lot of care and thought and we don't get it right all of the time. The dignifying part of this is that we care enough to keep trying – with all of those we interact with. While we share knowledge of violence, we all have different ways of thinking, responding, and being in the world – if we can accept this and work alongside each other then we offer dignity to others and ourselves. The relationships that are formed through and alongside WAI are crucial.

WAI offer acceptance of women however they turn up on the day – however oddly they appear to behave, or look, or no matter what they say – things that would be seen as aberrant in the outside world are just let to sit in here or are spoken about in our hui (nothing has happened that would endanger or harm others in the nearly 6 years of us functioning this way). It has become part of our kawa and it is definitely part of our ethic of

care for each other. We get so used to social responses from outsiders that pathologise or demean us when we are not behaving or appearing in socially accepted ways, and I believe that is why the women of WAI respond with such dignifying kindness and care to each other, no matter how we show up on a given day. Our kindness is different too – it isn't loaded with pity or tinged with power – the idea of 'helping from a better place'. We may not experience violence in a homogenous manner but we understand how it worked for us, and how we may have been seen or represented, so we offer genuine empathy – rather than sympathy.

Having the focus on art making means that this is our fallback position – we just keep making work around whoever is there, however they have come in. No one is sitting being looked at or analysed, we are not wondering what to say or how to help, and we simply continue to function around them, interacting as they want us to. This understanding of our different responses to violence is normalising, loving, compassionate, and upholds our dignity. It is important to note however that in the WAI context acceptance does not infer that we accept what has happened to us or the negative ways that we have been responded to.

Rongoā and Being

Violence and abuse are not mental health problems that counselling (or art therapy) can solve. They are problems of power and control, of oppression and marginalisation. They are problems which belong to the community not solely to individuals within it, yet 'victims' are overwhelming perceived and misrepresented as vulnerable, broken, isolated, dislocated individuals in need of professional help. The history of bias and blame in the responses 'victims' have been given has been perpetuated strongly through the 'helping' professions of social work and psychology, often creating an antagonistic relationship between these 'professionals' and those working at grassroots level (Danis & Lockhart, 2003).

From the 1970s through to the 1990s, at a time when women began to be encouraged to come forward and disclose violence and receive support, the social work profession were reputed to be not only uninformed about domestic violence, but also uncaring and unhelpful (Danis & Lockhart, 2003). There have been advances in the domestic violence education of these professions, but in reality many entrenched Western models of practice, attitudes, and beliefs still sit around the way women are responded to and perceived. Often women continue to be responded to from 'disease' or 'biomedical' models of practice, with an inherent focus on individual pathology and the effects of violence on mental and physical health (Downes, Kelly and Westmarland, 2014). While feminist therapy typically rejects the disease model, it may also unintentionally reinforce dominant social ideals if it ignores the complexity of women's lives and accepts the internalised oppression implicit in some of our narratives of victimisation and powerlessness (Baines, 2011). These common models marginalise crucial information of social context, social meaning, and social responses – RBP concepts which acknowledge power, resistance, and agency. Ignoring these responses, and often the violence itself, ignores forms of resistance that point to "symptoms of chronic mental wellness" (Wade, 2007, p.9).

In seeking a more accurate, positive representation of our ways of being the 2013 MMVA WAI model of practice embraced an understanding of the term rongoā. Rongoā is a Māori concept of holistic wellbeing involving the use of traditional Māori medicine through a diverse range of spiritual, herbal and physical practices. It is a system that acknowledges context and spirituality in the understanding of wellbeing. Rongoā Māori is a complex and tapu (sacred) approach to imbalances across the physical, spiritual, emotional and social domains, as "every healing intervention creates an opportunity for reviewing patterns of living, reinforcing the balance between spiritual and physical dimensions, consolidating identity and encouraging the development of positive relationships" (Durie, 2010, p. 7). Rongoā is strongly influenced by wairua – the spiritual realm. Inquiry into wairua is often seen as a first step into a wider understanding of a person's wellbeing. This assessment is followed by a process of clearing fear, balancing energies, and strengthening, enhancing and promoting oranga – wellness. While the word healing is one I have come to associate with

pathologising approaches to brokenness, and I do not view WAI as a therapeutic 'intervention', our many ways of "being" and understanding our being, is part of our WAI philosophy.

Many of our WAI women are Māori. Most have deep connections to their families (whānau) their ancestors (tipuna), to wairua (the spiritual dimension), to people (tangata), to the land (whenua), and to a Māori world view (Te Ao Māori). Many of our WAI women are also Pākehā with our own connections and relationships. The space WAI have created needs to offer safety to all of those who attend - to allow us all the space to be and represent how and who we are at any given time. Working from a Response Based Practice focus challenges many of the pathologising 'professional' approaches traditionally taken with 'victims of violence'. It allows us to focus on our responses to violence, not the effects these have had on us. In this context the emphasis is not on improving WAI members' wellbeing, but on acknowledging that we have done all we can to maintain this. The rongoā emphasis on wairua, identity, relationships with others, and the natural environment offers insight to our WAI approach, however, WAI does not and cannot offer Rongoā Māori. Rongoā was included in our original kaupapa to acknowledge the multiple dimensions of health and ways of being that remain crucial in this context to those who have known violence in all of its many forms.

While these understandings remain current the WAI collective have offered critique to the use of the word rongoā within our 2017 kaupapa, as some members (correctly) felt that our way of working does not accurately reflect the practice of rongoā - in fact the idea of rongoā actually contradicts our kaupapa if we understand rongoā as 'medicine' or a pathway to 'healing'. There was a perceived disconnect between the word initially chosen to represent this aspect of our kaupapa, and the concept that it was intended to hold for us. As discussed throughout this report – the multiple ways that we can 'be' in the WAI space are crucial to our self-representation and to upholding dignity. These ways of being include some dark

stuff and our need to be able to talk about it through our art making. Connecting this aspect of our practice with any one specific word then became a difficult proposition.

Durie (2001) discusses a continuum which extends between mauri noho (languishing) and mauri ora (flourishing), and describes four key areas that people can languish or flourish in. This model of practice, known as "Te Whare Tapa Wha", includes: wairua (the cultural and spiritual dimension); hinengaro (emotions and thinking); tinana (physical/ bodily); and whānau (relationships). Within this set of understandings WAI sits in a place explained by the word catalyst. As a catalyst we offer community action and commitment to a shared kaupapa, which can then potentially extend an awakening of the mauri (the life force) for those who engage with us. As a collective our collaborative approach is understood by Durie (2014) as a better way of working towards social justice outcomes. Within this collective approach we then extend a way of thinking that asks not "what is the matter with this person?" but "what matters to this person" (p. 70), and what matters most to us as individuals within WAI is that we can be how/ who we are at any given time.

The words wellbeing, or ora, hold understandings that can demean those who feel they don't fit within them in our space. Focusing on the concept of wellbeing then unintentionally offered further marginalisation to some collective members who did not feel that they consistently sat within this space. Understanding that this was effecting and confusing us as a collective was a pivotal shift in both the model of practice and my own personal (complacent) way of thinking. Hearing that some members felt that they couldn't speak freely about the less positive spaces they may inhabit (because many us of sit in spaces that appear more 'well') was difficult. The focus on wellbeing was effectively silencing voices within the very space that was intended to ensure they could be heard. An intense and robust discussion around our many layered ways of being offered a space for honest expression of these sentiments and for a much needed shift in the way we spoke about and framed these within our kaupapa. The word 'being' was selected as one that best encompasses what this aspect of the kaupapa means to us at this time. 'Being' for us allows

a layered and shifting approach – we can 'be' however we are at any time - confused, sad, angry, active, fierce, calm, enthusiastic, or engaged. There are layers of memory, resistance, oppression, hurt, change, creativity and much more that are then also allowed to exist in this space. Working within an understanding of 'being' allows us to be us – and, like any person, we are complex and fluid. 'Being' has therefore replaced the word rongoā in our 2017 model of practice.

The WAI focus on being is not a 'head in the sand', ignore the 'problems', pretend everything is okay approach. It is a way of re-framing and re-presenting what have been traditionally seen as our deficits, while acknowledging the shadows that we may still walk alongside. Women come to WAI with all sorts of diagnoses. Our kaupapa allows us to accept them as whole people, women who continue to respond with all that they can to their experiences of violence. Focusing on our many ways of being and changing the expected effects-based approach into a response-based approach gives us a way to flip deficits on their heads, and to talk about resistance, context, social responses, and culture alongside violence. This way of thinking about who we are allows us to challenge the mental health, trauma-informed, and medical discourses that advise the majority of the responses made to us. The way we have been seen, or are still seen, and responded to outside of WAI does not impact on how we are responded to within the collective. We are accepted for who we are and how we appear on any given day – there is no right way to 'be'. Art making offers us a way of self-representing and legitimating these 'different' narratives from whatever space we walk in. Having our voices validated through the public presentation of our art work acknowledges our autonomy. It allows us to explore and present our many layered, shifting responses to violence, and our identities.

Art Making

"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together"

Aboriginal Activist group, Australia
(cited in Fay, 2011)

When I mention art and women who have experienced violence an assumption is often made that what we are doing at WAI is art therapy. Based on stereotypical perspectives of who we are, it makes sense to people that we must be making art to make ourselves feel better – to get it out, and that we probably need the guidance of a professional to do so. After all, our experiences of trauma are complex and uncomfortable, they are not socially acceptable stories, and we are probably angry, ashamed, and embarrassed by our victimisation. We may also need help to ensure that we unpack the problems that led us into these 'abusive relationships' in the first place. There is a kind but condescending pity towards 'those poor women' who need the help such a group can offer. I am regularly seen as the person offering this help – something which dismays me in so many ways. Should I mention that I am 'just an artist', the facilitator, and also a member of the collective (e.g. not a therapist or social worker) then the way I represent WAI is sometimes seen as less valid, and somewhat radicalised or diminished due to the potentially unstable nature of my own experience. Most people are, however, kind, concerned, and open to hearing our kaupapa, if a little surprised by it.

"*Someone: So…..what do you do then?*

Me: I am an artist. (a beat) I work in the health service…

Someone: Oh. An art therapist…

Me: …er. No,…

Someone: …what?

Me: An artist… (pause…)

…and a researcher."

(Brown, 2012, p.25)

I have learned to accept that I can't change the perspectives of everyone I meet (although I have a good go) and that the best way to challenge these is through the exhibitions we hold twice a year.

WAI focus on an active engagement in art making as self-representation and social activism. As noted in the previous section, this is a very deliberate approach which challenges the stereotypes and understandings that those outside our experiences and cultures may hold about us. It is a direct response to the negative social responses received by those in the collective. Working in this way is our best attempt to address the disconnection between our experiences and the way we are portrayed in literature, art, and the media. If WAI were an art therapy based group then there would be an implicit acceptance that those attending were there for therapy - for the help that someone more 'together' could offer. The art works made would also suffer this perception – they would be just another way to expose, analyse and 'fix' the perceived deficiencies of the maker. Indeed, Brown (2012) asserts that "the application of art as medicine – as therapy – formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" (p.24). This non-therapy, participatory arts based approach is one described through a range of key qualitative arts-based research projects in the field of mental health by Stickley (2012). From this perspective, art is seen as social action, as a political voice, with studios such as ours best described as places to meet and work alongside others who understand. They are places where our creativity is free and valued.

While WAI are not a therapy based group I must acknowledge that those outside our collective (who are trying to understand our approach) often raise their conceptions that making art within this collective must be therapeutic even though it is not art therapy. Yes – art making allows us to go into a place of flow or energy, to speak in images about some very difficult subjects and to do it together, but I question - is it any more therapeutic than the art made by those who are not seen to have such obvious or public deficits? The Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand Art Therapists Association (ANZATA) website, in its

aims and objectives, notes that their association promotes "the therapeutic use of the arts for the improvement of human well-being", and defines the arts therapies as a "form of psychotherapy utilising creative modalities, including visual art-making, drama, and dance/movement, within a therapeutic relationship to improve and inform physical, mental and emotional well-being" (ANZATA, n.d.). At WAI our aim is to offer women the space, materials, technical skills, and community to create and exhibit their own social justice and artistic responses to their experiences of violence. Overwhelmingly these responses are multifaceted: they are personal; political; cultural; and socially active. Within the WAI context "social justice is concerned not in the narrow focus of what is just for the individual alone, but what is just for the social whole. Given the current global condition, social justice must include an understanding of the interactions within and between a multitude of people" (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007, p. 2). What WAI don't aim to do is improve member's wellbeing, as it is our perspective that the collective members are 'being' whatever they need to be.

The potential for social change which is inherent in the power of image making offers not only a mediation between individuals and collectives but also between "cultural, universal, transpersonal and personal meanings" (Jones, 2012, p.48) - it may demand responses to injustice. In this way art becomes not only a voice for us, but a social action – a way of creating change, challenging the stereotypes and myths that sit around who we are and identifying what the lived reality of responding to this violence is like. It is an opportunity rarely afforded us. The perceived symbiotic and beneficial relationship between art and therapy (Van Lith, Schofield, and Fenner, 2013), which WAI challenge, is also brought into question by art therapist Debra Linesch (cited in Junge, 2014), a woman who acknowledges finding her voice through art. She states that "sometimes I am not even sure there is a field called art therapy –perhaps this label is just another creator of arbitrary boundaries around processes that are complex, multi-layered and difficult to categorise" (p.129).

Collective Action

"Ehara taku toa i te toa engari he toa takatini

– My strength is not mine alone, but belongs to the many"

Māori Proverb

(cited in Penehira et al, 2014, p.105)

Collective action is defined by Marshall (1998) as action taken by a group in pursuit of its members' perceived shared interests. Working this way within a community is viewed as harder as it requires "more time, more discussions, more personalities, more questions, more opportunities for misunderstanding, but when it works well, the work you produce is greater than the sum of its parts" (Thompson & Sholette, 2004, p. 45).

Working as a collective has offered this kaupapa precious knowledge and deeply rooted ways of advocating for social change together. The WAI collective model of practice has developed from a pithy process of working alongside each other to make art, of gathering in and sifting knowledge, of careful listening to the often quiet voices of members, of deeply intimate dialogue, and meaningful reflection by the individuals within this collective. When those who are offered a part in this collective decision making process have been given very negative social responses from 'outsiders', when they have been 'diagnosed' and 'labelled' in ways that lower their social esteem and hurt their mana (dignity), it can take time to feel safe enough to participate. Understanding the social dynamics that impact on equitable collective decision making matters greatly, because all of us have wisdom to offer even if we are not used to being heard or respected. Often the most astute and profound responses come from those whose mana has been most oppressed – if we are listening. The WAI collective knowledge far exceeds any knowledge that I can offer, as the individual privileged with recording and responding to it.

The WAI collective's Anti-Oppressive approach "compels us to recognise and unlearn the everyday practices, assumptions, approaches, and methods that help maintain the status

quo" (Baines, 2011, p.71). If our collective aspire to challenge entrenched and unhelpful ways of responding, through a different approach, then we must be very clear about what we are aiming for and what we do not wish to perpetrate. Broad differences between the common social approaches taken with 'victims of violence' can clearly be seen in the table developed by Baines (2011) below [figure 22]. If WAI compare our approach against this table, there are many correlations. It is clear that we aspire to work within an anti-oppressive framework. We are a collective of 'insiders' or 'survivors' (not professionals or outsiders 'working with' survivors), we seek to share power through a mutual process of art making as advocacy for social change, and we are united through the kaupapa and kawa we have developed. Working in this anti-oppressive way upholds the dignity of our members as it challenges traditional and modern models of practice which individualise, pathologise, and 'help victims'.

MODEL	***Traditional***	***Modern***	***Anti - Oppressive***
View of power	Power over	Power within	Power with
View of the social order	Hierarchical	Egalitarian	Unjust
Institutional processes	Paternalism	Individualism	Solidarity
Nature of relationship	Pedagogical	Neutral and professionally distant	Mutual and dialogic
Nature of intervention	Corrective; punitive	Counselling and personal support; self-help; information and referral	Advocacy, organizing and political action
Examples	Child welfare, social assistance	Sexual assault centres, Addictions counselling	Grassroots anti-poverty groups

Figure 22: Fay, J. (2011). Comparison of Practice Models. [Table]. *In* Baines, D. (Ed). (2011). *Doing anti-oppressive practice: social justice social work*. Halifax, N.S: Fernwood Pub., c2011, 2nd ed.

What has become apparent about this WAI model and way of working is that the collective make decisions about the art making, the exhibition, the prioritising of resources, the kaupapa and kawa, and the public way we choose to present ourselves, however some of what happens at WAI is not undertaken collectively. The responsibility for budgeting,

accessing funding and resources, reporting, media engagement, communication, administration, community relationships and education is undertaken by the facilitator, a role that I have filled in Palmerston North since WAI began in 2013. It is now also a role that the two new WAI facilitators in Wellington and Blenheim are finding their feet in. With the majority of our collective members choosing to work anonymously this separation has been a necessary way of protecting the safe space we have created. It has become clear to me that the facilitator's role offers crucial non-collective support which allows the WAI collective approach.

Art making as a collective, where we can remain anonymous if we choose to, holds power. The solidarity experienced in making art together is viewed by Levine and Levine (2011) as essential to the restoration of kinship and the sense of being part of a living community;

> The arts are also capable of holding the experience of mourning what an individual or group has lost. Mourning and celebration are two essential ways in which art-making can touch the essence of being human. Both our tears and our laughter can hold us together (p.29).

If this solidarity is with others who know violence then there is no careful tip-toeing around – we can speak openly and understand readily, which allows authentic expression of our responses to violence, without further exposing or violating women.

Insider facilitation

The WAI collective approach offers an ethical opportunity for power relations to be considered and addressed. As identified in the previous section, setting WAI up in this way, as a collective making art together, allows us the best opportunity to share power with each other. A key principle in addressing potential power imbalances at WAI is that of insider facilitation. If everyone within our collective, including the facilitator, has experienced violence then the space becomes safe enough to hold authentic dialogue without fear of condescension, misunderstanding, sympathy, or 'help' from those outside our experiences. Every woman in our collective has felt humiliated, pitied, or 'less' than 'others' at some time because of the negative social responses she has received to her experiences of violence.

WAI aim to promote positive social responses, and to challenge deficit myths and stereotypes. This social justice response matters to us all because we have all been the recipients of these detrimental and marginalising ways of thinking and responding. If everyone at WAI is an insider then the potential for further oppression is at least mitigated. It is worth noting that simply being an insider to violence is not enough to ensure that we won't disseminate the types of negative responses we receive outside of the WAI space. The power of medical, trauma informed and therapy based discourses and the deeply entrenched and often invisible stereotypes and myths they perpetuate are dominant in the ways that we are approached and responded to outside of this collective. They are ways of responding that both 'professionals' and everyday people have offered us, and we often buy into these in order to tick the boxes that will allow us future autonomy, will ensure our dignity is upheld, or because (even though it doesn't feel 'right') it is the only mirror we have been offered to view ourselves in. Until collective members have had time to work within the WAI kaupapa and to grasp what is often a radically different way of thinking their responses may well fall into these socially constructed and 'acceptable' ways of responding.

Our collective have many years now of fostering in new members. We don't 'educate' directly. Challenging these intrinsic understandings in a forthright manner would not uphold people's dignity, so the collective offer stories, comments, and musings alongside the art making. Our studio walls are covered in posters that also reiterate this approach. Posters that contain messages like "*I don't have depression, I have oppression*", "*Compliance is not consent*", "*Once were nurturers*", and "*we make art – we don't do art therapy*" hum all around members as they drink coffee and make work. Understanding and engaging with our kaupapa in a personally meaningful way is something that must be incorporated individually, and it takes time and space. Sometimes collective members are still embroiled in court cases, custody disputes, looking for homes, or just surviving day to day, therefore functioning within two very different systems may just be too much to think about for a while. As insiders, wherever we are at with our understanding of the WAI kaupapa, we all bring empathy, kindness, understanding of violence, and manaakitanga (an ethic of care) to this space and to each other.

Even though I am an insider at WAI, I am aware that as the facilitator I hold different power. I do all that I can to temper this. I choose not to 'teach' overtly within WAI, despite having a teaching degree. I like to work alongside women and share things when I am asked, or at moments when it seems appropriate. This is an approach taken by the collective, who all jump in and make suggestions, share ideas, techniques, and inspiration. It is a way of working that has developed in response to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles, specifically that of not flaunting knowledge – "Kaua e māhaki" (p.120). We are women who have been oppressed by the power others have held over us, it is therefore crucial that power is seen and addressed in this context. I know that this way of working has frustrated some of our women who have come into WAI looking to be explicitly taught and led in their art making – some women even use language which offers power to me as the 'teacher' of our 'art class'. While that way of working would be much easier for me, and I know that there are many skills and techniques that I have learned in my years at art school that I could teach, I choose not to. This is not an easy or comfortable position to

be in as I often feel that I disappoint some women in the collective because they expect me to be more instructive and to offer them boundaries or guidelines.

Finding my place as an insider within our collective has been a constant battle between my desire to share what I know I can and my desire to just walk alongside women. I am an insider but also an outsider and this is a position that other women in WAI inhabit too, as they are, or have previously been, advocates who work with women who have experienced violence. I facilitate because someone has to be responsible for the funding, the day to day running, public presence, relationships with stakeholders, and curating exhibitions. This exposed position is not one that I would choose outside of this context, and not one that many of our WAI women would want, or be safe to hold.

Over the almost 6 years we have been running my understanding of how insider facilitation works within WAI has changed. I am much more inclined to sit back and defer to the collective whenever I can, although I know that I have specific skills and knowledge as an 'educated' artist that are my offering in this space, as a member. Being the 'researcher' (the one who gathers in and shares out the knowledge for us all) and the facilitator, is a privileged position and it clearly places me outside in the way that some of the collective members see me. It is a compromise that I understand and see as necessary as it furthers our collective's long term aims to see social change.

Chapter 5 The PhD developed Spirographic WAI model of practice

Figure 23: Keli. J. (2016). Spirographic Portrait of Karen Seccombe. [Digital Photograph].

From very basic beginnings as the four cornerstones of a whare (house) the MMVA WAI model of practice has significantly altered through this PhD research to reflect far more accurately who we are, how we work, and what matters to us a collective. My developing understanding of our WAI practice and kaupapa in 2015 initially altered the MMVA cornerstone model into a rings of growth and knowledge format, much like Bronfenbrenner's 1979 Ecological Systems Theory visual format (A Critical Reflection, 2016), which showed each of the key elements of our collective kaupapa as inclusive rings that surround our art making and self-representation. However, I struggled with this limited, circular, expanding (contracting) model because it did not allow me to demonstrate the

multiple, open, creative, and flexible ways of being, thinking, and making WAI have. Each circle, while contained within another circle, was discrete and insular - it was closed off to all but its nearest companions and it did not allow fluidity. It failed to show the relationships between the different threads of WAI, and the way that these intersect in many different ways; it failed to allow women the many juxtaposed spaces we need and, crucially, it failed to be open to our agency, change, growth, and movement across the elements of the kaupapa, and over time.

I spent many weeks focused on finding a visual way of representing all of these things that matter so much to us all. And then I played with my granddaughter (left the model to compost for some weeks) and just enjoyed creating the spirographic patterns that I had loved myself as a child. The repetitive rhythm of making, the line, colour, and intricate patterning in a Spirograph offer an addictive, seductive, yet simple way of making art. At the time it was fun. A few weeks later I found a beautiful reminder on my floor and something just clicked.

This act of taking a humble tool, and creating something complex and beautiful so accurately reflects the WAI approach to social justice, to our art making, and to our philosophy of ensuring any woman can make quality art works. The WAI model of practice is intended to be a flexible, practical, simple tool that can be used to build complex and beautiful responses to women's experiences of violence, and the Spirographic format [figure 24] works to show this effectively.

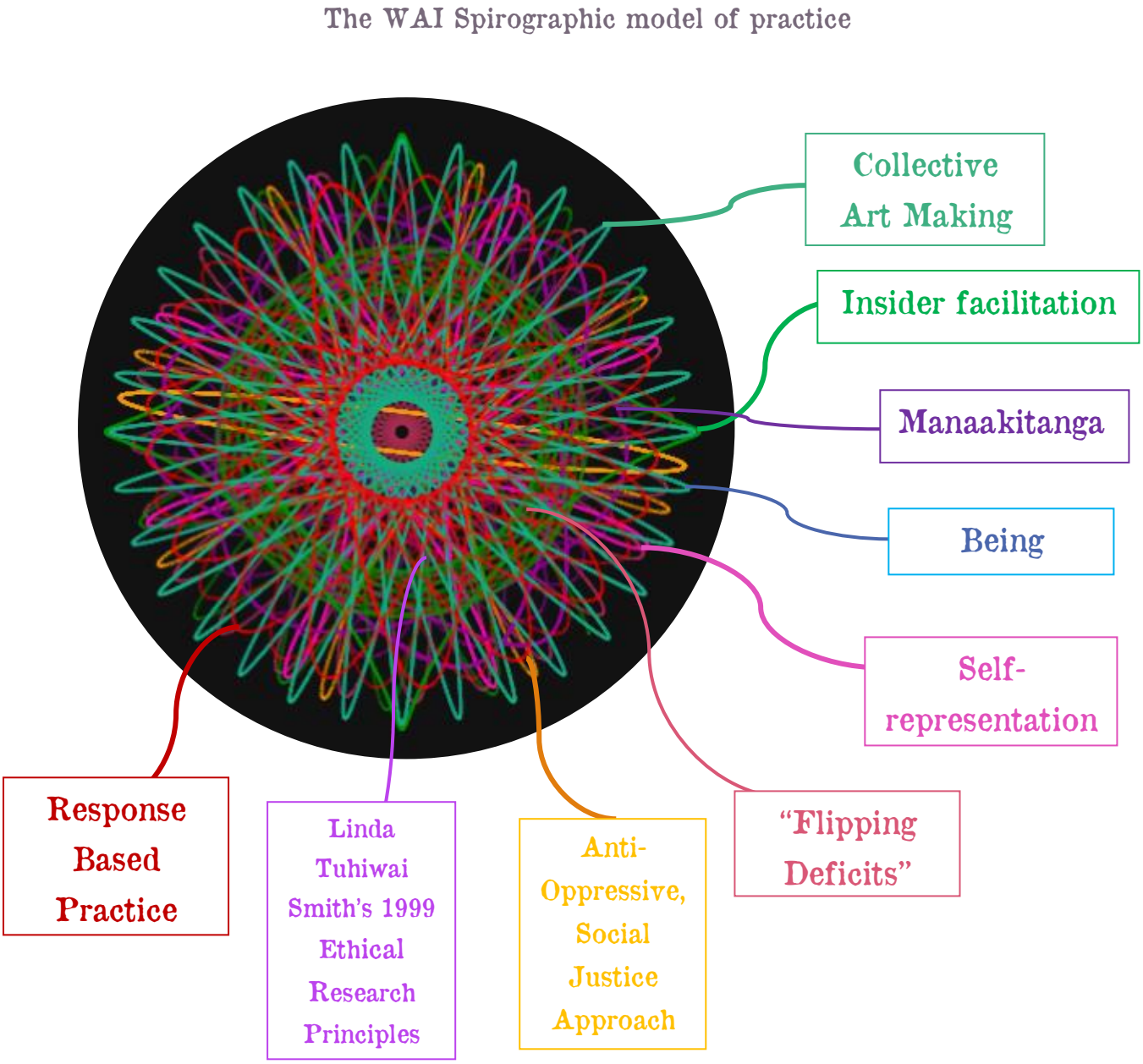


Figure 24: Seccombe, K. (2017). WAI Spirographic Model of Practice. [Digital Image].

Each thread or line is part of the WAI approach outlined in Chapters Two and Six. The threads represent elements of our kaupapa and understandings that have been with us since the inception of WAI: art making; collectivism; Response Based Practice; manaakitanga; our relationships; insider facilitation; and self-representation. They now also include other elements – things which have become more apparent or important over the period of the PhD research: anti-oppressive facilitation; social justice activism; Being; and our special WAI way of flipping deficits on their heads to share our light and challenge

binaries. They encompass our core beliefs and our kawa, or ways of doing things. They offer what one WAI member calls the 'WAI infusion', a complex rainbow mix of all of the things that WAI has come to be to the women involved.

The threads weave together in a geometric pattern: interlinking, crossing over; opening multiple spaces, creating multiple intersections of understanding, and allowing multiple ways of working within the model. They clearly reflect the complexity of spaces that we can choose to occupy within the WAI kaupapa. Acknowledging our multiple ways of being, experiencing, responding, and identifying, the many spaces allow us to move between these as we need to, and offer different ways of approaching the model as facilitators and collective members. The space at the centre can then be whatever we are responding to – it can be us self-representing, the dialogue we open through exhibition, or it can be the space that wraps around a member, or the collective. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) ethical research threads also weave throughout the model, forming the community approach. Where we situate ourselves and our practice on any given day can be flexible - we can move between spaces, we can sit to the outside edge, or be held at the centre. We can move through many spaces in one collective meeting, or throughout the making of one piece of art work.

This model very much reflects the way we interact with each other – sometimes women sit to the edge, when they need that space away from others, and sometimes we are at the centre of the manaakitanga, the making, or the kōrero (discussion), while still being given the protection of the kaupapa around us. Within this model we are then offered spaces to be whoever we are, to shift our position, and to respond however we choose to on any given day. It is a model that offers autonomy, flexibility, and multiple ways of being, learning, making, interacting, and connecting. Inhabiting these many spaces within the WAI framework unites us in solidarity yet also recognises our individuality.

We find here spaces that have been left behind or injured, spaces that have not been acknowledged, that are dark, uneasy or uncomfortable, but that are necessary: spaces that also conversely offer a place for light to get in. The work of Kura Te Waru Rewiri offers a new way of looking at these concepts of wāhi ngaro (lost or unseen spaces), through an art and personal practice of explorative abstraction, and a process of looking, observing and responding. Seen in her work X-X-X [Figure 25] this practice allows new ideas and new knowledge to exist and to speak - it creates openings for resistance, identity, and potential. It is a challenging and questioning approach informed by Māori realities, paradigms and beliefs.

Figure 25: Te Waru Rewiri, K. (2013). *X-X-X.* [Painting]. Retrieved from: http://www.toi.co.nz/Gallery.aspx?ProductId=272&Title=X-X-X%20by%20Kura%20Te%20Waru%20Rewiri

It is an approach that offers Te Waru Rewiri a place to construct liberating and empowering outcomes, beyond what is considered customary (Mason, Mané-Wheoki et al, 2014). Te Waru Rewiri demonstrates her own dignifying and humble way forward, a way forward that does not quaver in the face of oppression but also does not abrade. It is a way forward that makes sense to those of us working within the WAI model of practice.

The WAI Spirographic model of practice offers an approach that embraces ongoing growth and change – there is flexibility and space for new threads to make their way in and for the shape to change while still holding true to the intended form. This model allows potential.

The Kanohi ki kanohi model

Kanohi ki kanohi is a Māori phrase that can translate literally as head to head. In the WAI context kanohi ki kanohi means face to face contact, and refers to the weekly collective hui (meetings) that allow us to engage in person in a shared space (our WAI art studio) with each other. This way of working has been key to activating many of the concepts inherent in our kaupapa – concepts like manaakitanga (an ethic of care) can be enacted through the simple everyday acts of making cups of tea and providing kai (food). Sitting over a cuppa can offer a chance to chat about ordinary things and builds relationships and safety within the space. The kanohi ki kanohi way of interacting has been how WAI have functioned over most of the time we have been running, however over the past two years we have also begun to engage with women who cannot come in to the studio for various reasons, or who live too far away. Engaging with women in different ways has offered a challenge to our kaupapa and has required greater collective effort to ensure the WAI key tenets are enacted and respected. Reflecting deeply and continually on the ways that our kaupapa works (or doesn't) has offered the Palmerston North Women's Art Initiative (WAI PN) collective opportunities for gritty decision making and more refined direction.

WAI online

WAI have several members who, for various reasons, are unable to attend kanohi ki kanohi (face to face) in-studio hui. The WAI collective support this different way of interacting with us in a number of different ways but the majority of the interactions occur on our secret group Facebook page. Wherever possible materials are sent out to these members, and all concepts and projects are discussed in the online Facebook forum. Work created by distance members is included in our exhibitions. We do our best to spend time with our distance members, but we have not created an overt method for managing these special relationships. In an ideal world there would be specific funding to ensure that the extra costs of phone calls, posting art materials, books and information were covered.

Although there are many potential negatives of not being kanohi ki kanohi, (for example: the WAI MMVA research (McIntyre, 2013) demonstrated that relationships are key to WAI's success), this method of engagement is better than nothing and may mean women who are still in a space of violence and abuse, or who are unable to leave the home, can interact in some way with others, potentially offering at least some sense of connection and community at a time when they may be most isolated and alone.

Activating the kaupapa

While a written model of practice is necessary because it can outline the very specific tenets of the WAI kaupapa, and can challenge common therapy based understandings that sit around the best approaches through art to 'help victims of violence', it is theory only, if it is not applied. The WAI reflective analysis in Chapter six offers the praxis – theory in practice which has been the WAI way of 'walking the talk', and the method which has arbitrated and refined the knowledge which we have collectively developed and which is outlined in the guidebooks (Appendices A, B and C). This PhD research has been an ongoing integration of theory, practice, and reflection. It has required constant negotiation for understanding, ongoing interpersonal and collective dialogue, and gritty consideration. It is not a poetic or romantic transformation but is research grounded in the everyday reality of human interaction – which is often complex, messy, and difficult to define and analyse. Offering this collective knowledge in a practical format such as a guidebook allows the best opportunity for clarity and to challenge many of the entrenched understandings implicit in discourses of, and connections between, art and victims of violence. It offers a snapshot of our 'walk' as an art making collective, working for social justice in the discourse of violence. The real research is done every week in the WAI studio, on our secret Facebook page, and through the interactions we have with each other.

For some of us at WAI it has been over 50 years since violence was enacted upon us. These experiences may have become part of who we are but they do not define us. The negative

social responses given to us because of this violence are something that we may find difficult to speak about, to acknowledge, and to explain, as they enforce the many conceptions of shame and blame commonly attributed to victims. Post-crisis, after the intensity of social support often offered during 'the crisis', we may want a space to challenge the stereotypes that sit around these experiences that are a real, lived and an intimate part of our understanding. It is a space that we may not find again after we leave the safety and security of crisis support. If, however, we don't seek out others during 'the crisis' we may never hear positive responses from those with similar lived knowledge to ours. If all we see in the media and all we hear from those around us is overwhelmingly negative we may never speak out, and if we don't speak out – as those whose experiences are the most accurate and authoritative (Jury, 2009) - then social change will not occur. The activation of this research through collective art making and public exhibition matters.

Chapter 6 WAI – the Women's Art Initiative collective– reflective discussion

Figure 26: Keli. J. (2017). *WAI Wahine*. [Digital Photograph].

"O bird that found and fashioned me,
that brought me from the land
safe in her singing cage of bone,
the webbed wings of her hand.

O bird that was my vision,
my love, my dream that flew
over the famine-folded rocks,
the sky's reflected snow.

She took me to the topmost air,
curled in the atom of her eye,
and there I saw an island
rise out of the empty sea.

And falling there she set me down
naked on soil that knew no plough,
and loveless, speechless, I beheld
the world's beginning grow.

And there I slew her for my bread
and in her feathers dressed;
and there I raised a paradise
from the seed in her dead breast"

(Laurie Lee 1983, p.32)

The WAI collective grew from a seed of hope. It has become a space of protection, solidarity, connection, and social justice for those who choose to participate. This chapter offers a description of some of the art making understandings and approaches of the collective. It unpacks the ongoing written reflections recorded as data and creates a thematic discussion using photographs taken of both process and exhibition work. These reflections and art works are analysed to offer insight into the WAI collective's way of functioning and understanding which directly informs my personal body of artwork described in Chapter 7. The WAI guide books (see Appendices A, B, and C) offer a far more in depth interpretation of the practical everyday functioning of the collective.

An overview

The Palmerston North WAI collective (WAI PN) has continued to function since its instigation as part of my Masters in Māori Visual Art in 2013. The original members remain, for the most part, and new women have joined us each year. The WAI PN collective have 35 members who interact with us in a wide range of ways. These include online interaction, and kanohi ki kanohi (face to face) engagement. Working within an established collective offers benefits and also difficulties.

WAI PN know each other well now. We know what people like to make, we know the stories women have shared with us, and we enjoy each other as artists, friends and collective members. We have developed relationships which include a sense of belonging and support. WAI PN are in constant contact via text and our secret Facebook page and we meet weekly to make art, talk, and share nourishment – both physical and spiritual.

Figure 27: (2015). *WAI at the Domestic Violence Protest March*, *Wellington.* [Digital Photograph].

Maintaining the WAI collective into the future is part of the kaupapa of this research. Being a collective means membership and participation must be offered in an ongoing way – it is inclusive. The difficulties with this are that the collective may grow so large that it becomes impossible to provide enough space and resources, or to show all of the works that members may wish to exhibit. WAI PN offer this research the opportunity to analyse the WAI model of practice further down the track and to address concerns that arise within an established dynamic. Questions around how newcomers can integrate safely into an established collective, how resources are managed, and how to accommodate the ever widening range of skill levels into a coherent exhibition offer new insights and a way forward. WAI PN also provide an established paradigm from which to establish the new WAI collectives and to understand better the differences that facilitators, members and regions bring to this model, and those things that remain constant. Reflections made on these aspects of the collective have been, and will continue to be, incorporated into our collective guide books in an ongoing manner (see Appendices A, B, and C).

Key to the maintenance and development of the WAI kaupapa and collective practice are several elements. These include: relationships; the use of te reo Māori, and practices and approaches which respect Māori knowledge and ways of working together; a Response Based Practice approach; our WAI way of 'flipping deficits'; and clear and fluent communication. Only some of these reflections are included in this document as they are knowledge which continues to be described and developed in consultation with the collective, and which is being continually updated in the guidebooks.

Regional collectives

As part of this PhD research three Women's Refuges in the Marlborough and Wellington regions were approached to offer opportunities to instigate WAI collectives. The refuges chosen all have robust and applied understandings of the Response Based Practice approach to working with 'victims' of violence, and they have been provided with both agency and facilitator guide books which outline the WAI art making approach developed by the Palmerston North collective. All three refuges consented to begin the set up process, with support to access the required funding. The desire to instigate a WAI artmaking collective, by those working in the domestic violence field, evidences the perceived value, relevance, applicability and usefulness of the WAI model of practice. This instigation process began in 2015. It was originally intended that the collectives would be set up and the research into this trial process would begin in 2016. This process would offer perspectives on how/ if the WAI model of practice could translate across difference in place and people. The knowledge gathered would then be reflected in the PhD personal art making outcomes.

As a community outsider to the Wellington and Marlborough regions, applying for the necessary funding was a complex and difficult undertaking, which markedly extended the anticipated timeframe for the set up process. The funding process was further complicated by some funder assumptions that an art based collective of women who have experienced violence must come under the category of mental health, or art therapy, and may therefore

not be eligible for 'normal' arts funding - offering yet another example of how women who have experienced violence are stereotyped, and further supporting many of the arguments made in previous chapters. Regional variations in the understood languaging of funding applications has also effected this process. WAI PN have been fortunate that Palmerston North Creative Community funding forums offer an opportunity for applicants to speak to their applications. The questions raised about the 'therapeutic' nature of our WAI PN collective have been able to be addressed face to face, and clarity around our applications given. It has been much more difficult to clarify the specific approach that WAI undertakes in a written application, for regions outside of my local community, without the opportunity to address the stereotypes which connect art and abused women, and the implicit understandings within these.

Wellington Women's Refuge (WWR) and Te Whare Roki Roki (TWRR) Māori Women's Refuge in Wellington chose to work together to instigate a joint WAI collective. This is a way of working that has been effective for these refuges in implementing their women's education programmes. In late 2016, after 18 months of unsuccessfully attempting to find funding WWR and TWRR took an immense leap of faith in appointing a paid WAI facilitator, to take over their funding applications, and begin the set up process. Passing over this responsibility to someone who understands and knows how to approach the Wellington arts and funding community was an immense relief. While I did not manage to access any funding for the Wellington WAI collective their new facilitator has. As my role in WAI PN has always been voluntary I was very grateful to see that these refuges had also chosen to acknowledge the time requirement for their facilitator and accessed 25 hours per week of funding for this role, in the short term. Marlborough Women's Refuge and Sexual Abuse Resource Centre (MWRSARC) in Blenheim have taken a different approach, waiting until I had accessed funding on their behalf before electing to approach a facilitator and begin the set up process for their collective. Their ambition is that their facilitator will also be paid, or given a koha (contribution), for the role.

As the route into setting up the WAI collective is not a prescribed one, more a 'described' one, this process can be a little daunting. The kaupapa or ground is offered, but the whare (house) built on it is one designed by the individuals in each collective – something which offers autonomy but can also be intimidating. Early conversations with each facilitator offered assurance that the collectives belonged to those involved and should therefore operate in ways that made sense to their community requirements and aspirations. As I have a very 'hands off' approach to these outside collectives I rely heavily on those involved working out who they are and what they want for themselves. This approach has worked well with WAI PN but it has taken some time and reflection to understand our way of doing things and being together. Our kawa (which can be translated as our ways of doing things) were not written until our third year of operation.

I have stressed the importance to the new WAI facilitators of just being together and making art, and allowing the collective to grow into itself. It took WAI PN at least a year to become coherent in who we were and much longer to establish a real collective dynamic – and much of that was my learning. I acknowledge that this organic methodology does not make for a simple or formulaic implementation – it is more of a problem solving approach which requires a great deal of reflection and competence, but both current facilitators will readily manage this. The difficulties noted to date have had more to do with the different spaces that art collectives and social work programmes inhabit, and the understandings that the collective members, the facilitators (as artists and insiders to violence) and the refuges (as providers of advocacy and education, but also quite often insiders also) bring to this shared space. It will be interesting to see the differing progressions down the track. I am already excited by the innovative approaches being taken to starting out. The WAI Wellington facilitator has stepped into her role with an initial focus on participating in a global star weaving project - The Million Stars to End Violence. This has meant she has hit the ground running, with immediate media coverage and a public profile for the Wellington WAI collective – something which took a long time for WAI PN to build up. It has been a very judicious start – with all media information and handouts provided for participants WAI Wellington has been able to capitalise on the professionalism and organisation of the

venture itself to promote their trial collective. While this approach has been a clever way of creating an immediate public profile (important for future funding) it has challenged the collective ethos. New collective members can easily be put off if the decision making process and opportunities for autonomy are taken from them. The facilitator of the Blenheim WAI collective, has taken a different approach, thinking ahead to the process of establishing a sturdy collective relationship between those involved and to creating potential end of year exhibition works. I believe both methods can work over time, and they will change as the collective dynamic develops and members take ownership of their kaupapa. They will be successful because those implementing them believe in them and want to see their collectives prosper.

The set-up process has taken almost two years for these refuges, from the initial approach to the collectives being up and running. This aspect of sharing the model of practice has required a tenacious and determined attitude from all of us. It has been clear that access to adequate funding has had an enormous bearing on the ability of the refuges to instigate their collectives. Adjacent to this has been the difficulty of inadequate time for all involved. The core business of each independent Women's Refuge is crisis intervention and this must take precedence over post-crisis interventions – no matter how much they mean to those who participate, or how keen staff and governance boards are to implement new initiatives. Staff at refuges are constantly under physical, emotional, financial, and time-based pressure when working to ensure safety, advocacy, and education for women and children.

Analysing the ongoing progress and mentoring the process of these two new WAI collectives when they have only just been set up, three years in, is no longer something that this research aspires to – it would be nearly impossible to do given the limited timeframe before the research is due to be completed. Instead an overview is offered, for the purposes of grounding the kaupapa. As the purpose of this research was to create a model of practice that would translate across regional and facilitator differences, the ongoing mentoring and reflections post-PhD will continue to be disseminated as adaptations within the WAI

guidebooks, thus ensuring integrity and flexibility and an accurate reflection of practice for future participants. While the initial trajectory of the research has altered, the time that would have been spent on mentoring and supporting the new regional collectives has instead been spent refining, deeply reflecting on, and unpacking the knowledge in the WAI Palmerston North collective. This unexpected research method has offered a richer, more in depth model of practice, and knowledge that is firmly grounded in who we are, which has developed through an ongoing process of robust consultation within our community.

WAI PN art making: process and techniques.

This section describes key elements of our WAI PN art making which have been recorded through the research process, and which are presented as the research data. Described are some of the processes, themes, and symbols that have become evident across the nearly six years we have worked together as an art making collective for social justice.

WAI offer ways for women to make art that has dignity, as much as our collective kaupapa seeks to uphold their dignity personally. The purpose of our collective is not to turn out fabulous artists (although we have many of those). It is instead to ensure that any woman, whatever her experience or skill level, can make work that self-represents her responses to violence in a professional, polished way that will be taken seriously by viewers if she chooses to exhibit.

The very process of art making at WAI is dignifying. Women work across a wide range of media and concepts. They have the autonomy to makes choices every time they walk in the door, and the collective supports these differences wholeheartedly. Playing and messes are embraced as effective learning strategies. Sharing of knowledge, skills and techniques occurs across the collective constantly. Our interactions are focused around our art making processes so they are natural and relaxed, especially for newcomers who may feel nervous about what is expected of them in this space. When discoveries are made, or works are

successful members rejoice and take an interest. The WAI art making environment is rich, inspiring, supportive, and dignifying because of the kaupapa we have developed as a collective. If we view the role of making as a way to "give life to things, but also to show evidence of life within us, perhaps also at a spiritual level" (Charny, 2011, p.43) we can see the life we give to these very different narratives. Our making evidences our resistance, growth, and identities, our ways of being, and the collective and individual ways of working we have developed. The WAI collective approach offers a standpoint against the therapy based discourse of 'helping victims' through art making. It challenges common deficit-based conceptions and ways of working often framed within the mental health field, and social services.

The Art Making Outcomes

Using a multi-faceted research methodology which analyses artwork as social justice responses to violence allows for a paradigm shift in the outcomes which may be anticipated. This research does not seek to identify the effects or impacts of violence on the maker through the vehicle of their artworks. It does not record the health benefits of art making in this setting, or identify the healing that has occurred for participants - it does not offer up well people in exchange for those who were identified as unwell previously. The WAI outcomes within this research are the collective and individual artworks, the processes, and the model of practice created within this different approach to 'post-crisis' art making. The outcomes discussed in this section are analysed as social responses and discussed in categories that have naturally developed within the collective. These outcomes inform both the imagery and the approach taken in my personal body of PhD artwork, *the clarity of light* exhibition, discussed in Chapter seven.

It is important to note here that analyses of the artwork of 'trauma survivors' are often constructed through a therapeutic lens, with an inherent focus on the effects of violence on the art makers' wellbeing, psyche, or development, and a focus on the journey to 'healing' Referring to the interviewer and art maker as 'therapist' and 'client' within a study also establishes a power dynamic and assigns understandings that further marginalise those

being researched. Some studies, such as that by Eisenbach, Snir, & Regev (2015), have analysed artworks by interviewing the makers about their experiences of 'trauma', without ascertaining their personal understandings of the symbols they have chosen to use within the works. It is stated in the study by Eisenbach et al that "it would also be of value to ask the participants about the symbols in their works" (p.55), however because of the "considerable vulnerability" (p.55) of these women this opportunity was not given. What is most interesting is that these voluntary participants were interviewed about their traumatic experiences and the place of art in their lives, and their art work was analysed by two 'judges' described as "experienced art therapists" (p.46), but the opportunity to speak to the symbols, which may have offered these women dignity and demonstrated their resistance, was considered too risky.

The WAI artworks offer visual representation of the threads of understanding that are held within the WAI Spirographic model of practice identified through this research, in Chapter Five. Below, a selected body of works from across the time that WAI PN have run demonstrate the way that we have developed of challenging many of the negative representations, myths and stereotypes that sit around who we are as women who have experienced violence. They evidence our art making approach, and acknowledge our resistance, many ways of being, and dignity. They allow us to self-represent our responses to violence and our identities. They offer both collective and individual integrity, and are the motivating data for the PhD personal art making component of this research.

Themes

If we challenge the stereotypical ways that women who have experienced violence are seen and represented through visual language we must demonstrate evidence that our self-representation as part of the WAI collective is different. A discussion of the symbolism, approaches and ways of working used by the collective must therefore be included. The work WAI makes comes from within specific social contexts. Most of the women of WAI are currently living away from violence. Some of us left many, many years ago, some of us left recently, and some move between spaces of safety and spaces where violence still remains. WAI offer places to women who are currently safe but often situations change. We do not exclude those who are once again walking alongside violence, although women may often disappear at these times. There are many reasons for these absences, and women know they are always welcome to return. While we operate as a collective we all have our own unique ways of doing things and our own understandings of violence and how it was (or is) for us. We are making work from the place we stand in today as 'survivors', although we may also have used (or still use) creativity as a tool for survival during violence.

A range of themes have become apparent across the five years of our WAI PN collective working and exhibiting together. WAI PN share symbols, design choices, understandings, and ways of doing things that may challenge some common analyses of art work made by 'victims' or 'survivors' of violence. Many discussions around these choices have occurred naturally within the collective working environment and these have informed the analysis of the works selected. The coherency of themes present in the works across this timeframe has also offered clear direction in this analysis. The symbols and materials we select, and the way we choose to work as individuals and as a collective, form a language that we read in each other's works. We share these deeply personal understandings as artists / activists and women who self-represent in order to accurately reflect our understandings, knowledge, and identities. The narratives that sit around our art making choices are deeply personal, therefore I share only those insights that offer the least likelihood of exposure and hurt for those who have generously allowed this analysis. Wherever possible the women of WAI

have expressed the understandings that they are comfortable sharing themselves, and with their permission I have taken the liberty of developing themes and creating a discussion. A select range of examples of WAI collective members' art works are included, with permission, to emphasise some of the key unifying themes which have been identified. This is by no means a definitive survey, as the breadth and individuality of our symbolism, themes and approaches and their associated meanings would be another thesis on its own. The subjects and approaches identified in this section are only those which intimately inform the other main component of this research – the personal body of artworks examined in Chapter seven.

What has become clearly evident is that the majority of the work made by our collective represents personal identity rather than traumatic experience. We speak for ourselves, for the way we have responded to our experiences and understood them, for who we are, and for those things that we value and protect. The overt representation of traumatic memory is rarely seen and is not a big part of the way most of our collective want to work. Making art in a manner that upholds our dignity and recognises our proficiency has become part of the collective's kaupapa and our choices clearly reflect this. We create work that is interpreted in very specific ways by our collective. Some of the same symbolism may be evident in other studies, yet may hold quite different meanings for WAI.

Symbolic imagery

Woman / the body

Figure 28: Yamaya. (2013). [Mixed media].

Women are portrayed frequently at WAI. We often depict or refer to the female form, representing women's bodies, or specific body parts such as faces, hands, and genitals in a wide range of forms and media [figures 28 & 29]. This is an interesting theme for a group of anonymous artist/ activists. We assert our physical visibility from a position of nameless and faceless invisibility. As 'victims of gender-based violence' our female bodies are often publicly represented in ways that we do not relate to.

After the horror and indignity of violence, women's bodies may be further 'used' in media imagery that supports deficit, blaming, and pathologising mental health and medical discourses – have a quick Google and there are a plethora of images which will reinforce this argument. Overwhelmingly our bodies are portrayed as bruised and bleeding, our faces are ashamed or terrified, and our hands are held up or curled around us in defense, or they lie quietly in abject, broken, submission. While the intent may be to raise awareness and offer assistance, for those who violence most effects such portrayals may only offer further humiliation.

Representing our bodies ourselves offers us the opportunity to make visible our resistance, our courage, our self-governance, our poise, and our pride in who we are. In presenting our bodies in affirmative ways we defy the dangerous stereotypes that attempt to define us. Instead we offer bodies that nurture and protect life, which are strong, gentle, responsive, and beautiful, and allow us to do the things we want to.

Figure 29: Keli .J. (2015). *WAI Collective Installation – Tree.* [Photograph].

Nature and her inhabitants form a strong discourse in our work at WAI, both indivdiually and collectively. We make some very personal and intimate connections with animals, birds, flowers and plants and this symbolism has appeared throughout all of our public exhibitions from 2013 to 2017, with the titles reflecting these understandings – *Emerge 2013, Buds of Hope 2014, Bloom 2015, STRONG: w0rds, w0men 2016,* and *LAYERS of Being 2017.*

While nature strongly reflects our growth, identities, whānau, and life it can also depict the many seasons of our responses to violence and our potential, allowing us a language with which to portray our dormancy, or dark seasons, alongside our renewels or seasons of abundance.

Figure 30: Mahe, C.J.(2014). *Snail.* [Glazed].

As an ‘art educated’ maker I have certain ideas about what ‘good art’ looks like. Through my education I have been offered specific knowledge which allows me to make things that may even be understood as ‘good’. While it has been an immense privilege to learn about the fine arts, art history, and many specific art making techniques, this ‘art-informed’ way of thinking has not always been helpful within the WAI collective.

Figure 31: Keli J. (2016). *Portrait of M.E.* [Digital Photograph].

Working in a space where accidents and mistakes are seen as valuable (and are often presented at exhibition as our end results), where poor, free, and recycled materials are treasured as much as the best materials money can buy, and where ‘our knowledge’ about art making is privileged above ‘correct’ ways of doing things, is liberating - in a scary kind of way. This way of thinking about art works that are not perfect and materials that can be seen as ‘less’ makes sense to those of us who have also been seen as deficient.

The rules about art making are therefore a little different in our WAI studio. For many of us at WAI there is a sense of safety and freedom which manifests itself in the way we play and make a mess, or encourage each other to try things out just to see what will happen. We have developed a risk taking culture that embraces difference, challenges those who work with us, and plays to our authenticity, and our ‘abilities’ , privileging our voices over carefully practiced techniques.

Figure 32: Yamaya. (2013). *My World.* [Mixed Media].

If we want to have a go at something then we do. Sometimes this means that the work can be quite humble or a little clumsy, but often the integrity it has more than makes up for any lack of expertise. It is this sincerity, rawness, and truth that viewers often respond to in our works. This way of working can be seen in Yamaya's *World* [figure 32]. Created from old newspapers and water, Yamaya uses a paper pulp technique which privileges 'throwaway' materials. It is a technique that has come about through necessity and messing about with what was on hand. It takes a lot of time to mix paper slurry, mould, dry, and paint it, but time is something that we respect in this setting. Collective members have played with many materials and techniques at WAI, and 'wrecking' and 'reworking', or working with broken and less than perfect materials and art outcomes sits easily in this space.

Flipping deficits

The term ‘flipping deficits’ is one that has found its way into our WAI vocabulary, along with a range of other rather wry descriptors that we use together to identify who we are and what we do. We have been known to describe ourselves as ‘having artism’, and to depict the WAI way of working together as the ‘WAI infusion’. This humour disguises some very real and pathologising diagnoses, discourses, approaches, and understandings that have been offered to us outside of the WAI space.

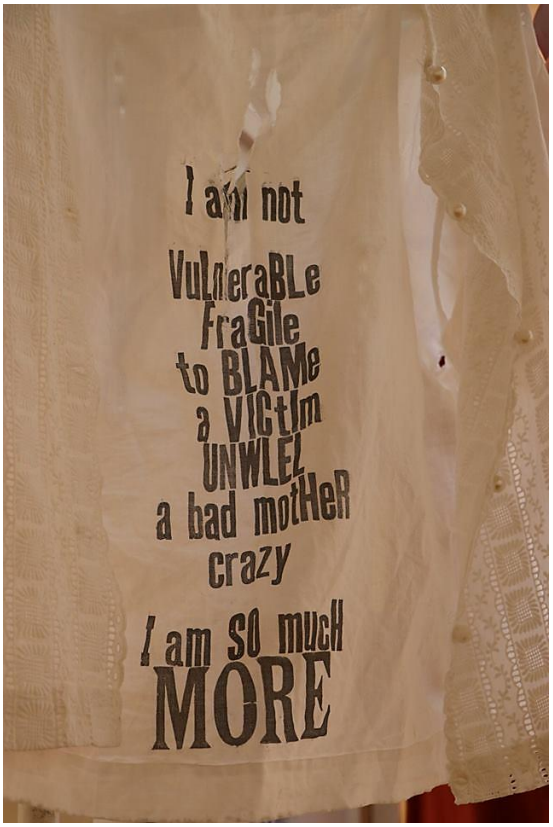


Figure 33: Jo. S. (2016). [Letterpress on Fabric].

The term flipping deficits is an important one as it describes the way that WAI challenge and respond to the many, many deficit representations and negative social responses made to us, as women who have experienced violence. Key to this term is the critical exposure that it brings to those things that continue to oppress us long after the violence has ended.

If we seek a different response, and to change things, then we must expose and re-dress the oppressive perspectives and practices that inhibit change. In order to flip something onto its back you must know it well enough to approach it carefully, and unfortunately we do, as we are often intimate with many of these very negative understandings. Flipping deficits has become a term that describes a complex practice of analysis, discussion, response through art making, and transformation (not necessarily in that order). It is not easy to expose ideologies which are embedded and seen as common sense, but which conceal layers of ongoing power and control (Hadley, 2013), but we attempt this because we have something to say – we want our voices heard and we want others to benefit.

We have to trust our own knowledge and the wisdom that sits within this collective space to promote our understandings that "if we become acutely distressed because people do bad things to us, or because of the cultural oppressions which surround us, then there is a real sense in which our supposedly dysfunctional behaviour is in fact a mark of our sanity" (Stone, 2012, p.173).

Figure 34: Sash. (2016). [Letterpress on Fabric].

We acknowledge that our art activism is a privilege, as we can challenge the language of dominance to which so many must acquiesce in order to access what they need (Reynolds, 2016). By speaking out and flipping dominant ways of seeing we contest the 'appropriate' victim behaviours of shame and silence that continue to undignify, stigmatise and oppress us, and this is an important part of self-representing.

Colour offers artists pervasive and elusive ways to achieve expressions of their cultural and personal perspectives, however colour cannot be separated or privileged above other theories for understanding or examining works of art. As viewers we respond to colour, but colour is a language that is not universally understood, and as Paul (2017) notes "no colour stands alone or unmitigated, uninflected by adjacencies or ambient environment" (p.9).

Art attributed to 'victims' of violence often notes the use of the colours red and black which are viewed as being "used frequently in works to depict aggressive images related to evil and blood" (Eisenbach et al, 2015, p.48), pain, injury, but also vitality and vibrancy. Cooper (1978) comments that in many cultures black is a colour which represents mourning, grief, mortification, sorrow and loss, while red can represent energy, power, blood, and sexual excitement.

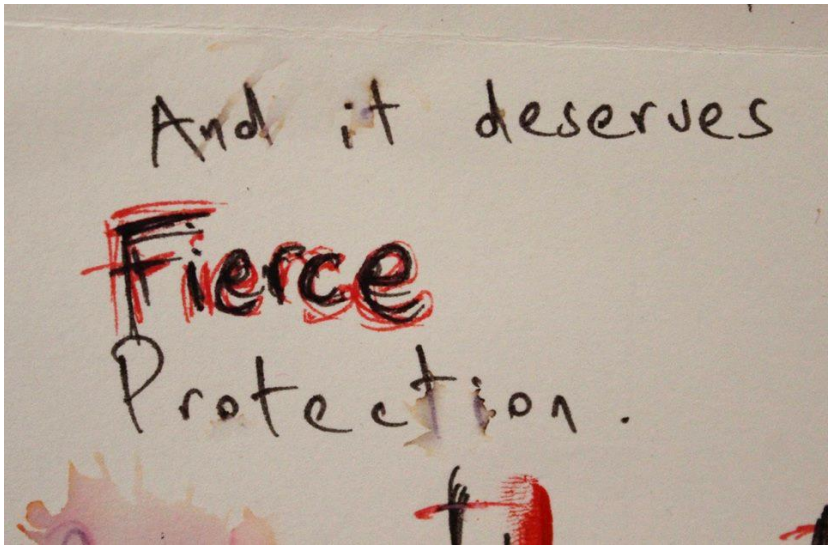


Figure 35: KPM Artist/Activist. (2016). *She Speaks*. [Pen on Paper].

Black is seen as passive while red is active and triggers emotions. Used together they can be seen to represent "a conflict in the participants' psyches" (Eisenbach et al, 2015, p.48). Red and black are colours which viewers expect to see in the WAI visual vocabulary. They are colours that some of our collective use sometimes with deeply personal and cultural meanings [figure 35], but overwhelmingly our colour choices reflect our identities now and the way we frame these within the WAI context. If we do choose to use red and black then it can often hold a very different meaning for us, for example: in Aotearoa New Zealand, the

colours red, black and white are traditionally used by Māori, with the colour red sometimes referencing mana (dignity).

At WAI we often choose greens, browns, and neutrals - earthy colours to demonstrate our connections to the land (whenua) and the natural world around us [figure 36]. These deliberate choices clearly correlate with symbolic understandings and historical uses of the actual earth as a painting pigment (Paul, 2017), although what may be unique for the women of WAI is the sense of freedom and the challenge to oppression, containment, and violence that these colours may offer us.

Figure 36: Keli J. (2016). [Mixed Media].

If we are growing we are resisting the dangerous stasis which violence seeks to create. We have autonomy, we are grounded, we have what we need to nourish us, and we have space around us to allow us to expand and breathe.

As a derivative of red (with its connotations of passion, violence, power, strength, force, and charity), pink is often seen as sensuous, girlish, sweet and sexually playful (Paul, 2017).

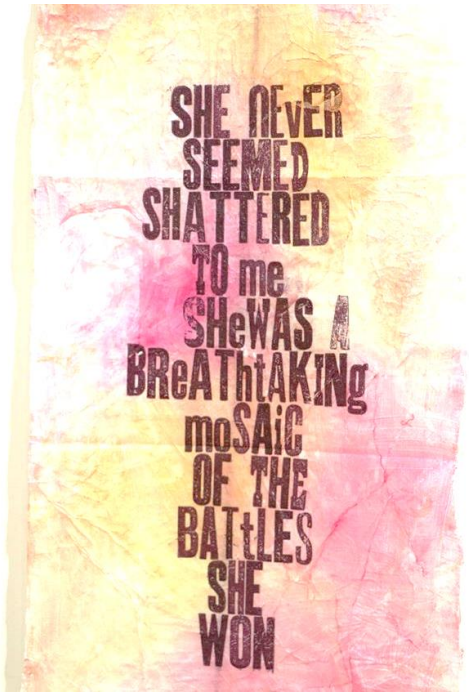


Figure 37: M.E. (2016). [Letterpress on inked paper].

We use a lot of pink at WAI – in all its many shades from blush to magenta. For us this colour may represent hope, innocence, love, naivety, joy, poignancy, abundance, generosity, womanliness, and kindness [figure 37]. It is a colour of immense strength and power in our visual vocabulary as it allows us to present forthright, deficit-challenging artworks in ways that are not immediately affronting or confronting but which may softly offer robust narratives, in direct opposition to the typically 'passive' gender-based connotations attributed to this colour.

Purples and blues also feature predominantly – for us they are spiritual, ethereal, calming, poetic, sad, and reflect what one collective member calls "the colours of the soul".

Figure 38: M.E. (2016). [Acrylic on canvas].

Traditionally these colours offer the power to represent time, space and distance (Paul, 2017) and this is an attribute the women of WAI may utilise in different ways – because for us time, space and distance may have different understandings. Often we talk about violence using terminology that reflects the stages of "before, during, and after" violence, reflecting this delineation through our responses and the changing social contexts of each period. Time is different too within each of these stages – the time of 'during' may indeed be enduring. Space is differently understood also – for us it may equally be an internal compartment more than its external understanding; it may be the energy that exists between two people; or the bubble that may sit around us – isolating or protecting us, depending on who has created it. The work by M.E. [figure 38] addresses this concept of space and time, of before and after, both through her imagery and her use of colour. In this

work the figurative elements embrace the colour blue, and the raven and kotuku represent the cohabitation of both darkness and light, before and after, within the present. This work clearly demonstrates strength and dignity and represents a space of peace, understanding, and deep reflection.

White is a colour that contains all colours but it can also act as an absence of colour or a way of removing colour from artworks. The colour white has associations with clarity and purity, physical and psychological cleanliness, absence, and limitless space. White links to light, the ethereal and spiritual (Paul, 2017). White is the binary opposition of black – a colour often associated with trauma, sadness, darkness, and hurt. We like white at WAI because it offers an opportunity to extend our narratives in an unsullied way, to present ourselves as untarnished bodies of light, despite our experiences of violence. White is a colour that feels open and calm, pure and unadulterated, allowing clear space and offering both us and our viewers a quiet place to catch a breath. It speaks to the binary of light and darkness which the women of WAI walk with often, and which also appears in the work of many of our collective members.

In much the same way as white speaks to our purity and clarity, iridescent opals (usually in the form of ink) are used by one collective member, Keli. J. to represent her essence or mauri – the part of her that has remained untouched and pure amongst the dirge of violence. This choice of effect (as the iridescent inks come in many colours) links strongly with her symbolic use of the lotus flower, which arises from murky depths to open unblemished on the surface of water. Clearly representing the transition from darkness to light both Keli. J's symbols and the selection of colours and chosen effects work together to tell her narrative, speak to her identity and to challenge the ways she has been seen and responded to. These are some of the colours and effects that beguile and surprise our viewers at exhibitions, conflicting with the expected colours of the anticipated representation of our trauma. This layering of symbolism through technique, colour, material, and imagery is common at WAI – as it is in most artist's studios.

Figure 39: Keli J. (2016). [Letterpress on fabric]. KPM Activist/ Artist. (2016). [Oxides on Ceramic].

Language is a powerful tool. It can be used to represent 'others' in ways that marginalise and further their oppression. It can hide or minimise violence, and make us see the 'victims' or 'survivors' of this in a certain way. It can blame, shame, pathologise, and offer other negative responses which legitimate and reinforce violence. Women who have experienced violence are often portrayed using very negative language. We are seen and represented in ways that hurt our mana or dignity, and do not reflect what is in our hearts. Words often sit around us, describing who we are, speaking for us, or about us. As 'victims' and 'survivors' we are rarely offered the opportunity to share our own words.

The power of language can travel both ways - the women of the WAI collective offer viewers a different languaging around violence, and who we are as women who have experienced this. We challenge deficit, stereotypical, mutualising, and pathologising perspectives and approaches through our art making. Text has become an integral part of this social action and this is included in many aspects of our making [figures 33, 34, 35, 39 and 40].

WAI love printing with old letterpress through the Homeprint studio in Feilding. We have developed a remarkable relationship with this special space and with John Brebner whose lifelong collection and passion sits within it. Letterpress printing offers the women of WAI a voice that is professional and dynamic regardless of their artistic ability.

Figure 40: (2015). [Letterpress set up for Printing].

Letterpress printing is a technique, a skill that can be taught and used in a multitude of ways. Collective members cherish the sense of competence print making offers them as art makers and value the voice this offers. Homeprint's rabbit warren of rooms, with printing presses, artworks, books, tools, and piles of paper everywhere, and John's astounding collection of font styles and sizes entrance us as art makers. The energy of the space and the safety that John and Allison have offered us has encouraged the use of this medium, but there is something more than just exposure and availability that keeps us printing with text. It is incredibly powerful to say something in a forthright and openly understood way. Text speaks to many people – it has a clarity which less overt forms of art may not have. It is a lot harder to ignore.

It doesn't seem to matter who walks in our door, what their art making experience is, or how they are feeling on the day - if fluid materials are made available people respond to them. WAI often share our bookmaking skills with outside visitors and the process of creating inky paper for book covers always opens a space of joy and excitement.

Figure 41: Mahe, C.J. (2014). [Marbling on Paper].

The uncontrolled nature of fluid materials appears to alleviate any anxiety about creating 'proper art work' and the delight people have in seeing their colours undulate across a wet surface, melding with each other, blossoming out into unexpected forms and shades never ceases. The women of WAI continue to love the fluidity of ink five years after it was first introduced. Marbling, the use of spray bottles of water, wet washes, and sponge work also offer us a similar satisfaction and freedom. Allowing things to find their own pathway seems to make sense to us.

Figure 42: Lou. (2014). [Marbling process].

We know control and we understand freedom, we use both in our artmaking. Working in this way also makes painting an activity that can be undertaken by anyone, at any skill level, with beautiful and often unexpected results – something which is an important part of our kaupapa.

This sense of fluidity seems to morph into other areas, effecting both our thinking and our making processes. WAI collective members work across a wide range of media, and commonly transfer between these with ease. We 'play' readily and take the skills we learn seamlessly into other areas. We leap in and attempt things that are often deemed technically difficult with insurmountable problems (by those poor souls we ask to work alongside us) because we have ideas that demand this of us. We share our ideas, ways of working, and skills without hesitation - which offers a fluid and flexible collective dynamic. We opt in and out of the making and talking within our studio, and in and out of the collective itself as we respond to each other and to our lives. Fluidity is important to us – it allows us to continue to grow and change as a collective and as individual makers within this space.

Themes summary

The themes identified within this section are a brief snapshot of some of the WAI PN collective's understandings and ways of working that feed directly into the personal art making component of this research - *the clarity of light* works identified in Chapter seven. The themes act as the research data, yet their analysis is limited by very necessary requirements for privacy and the upholding of dignity. While this analysis, based on the ongoing written reflections collected within the WAI studio space, is offered it must be noted that many highly complex, intimate and confidential knowledges remain silent within the artworks in this public space. To expose these innermost understandings would be to expose those who have offered so much already, and this would negatively counter the research approach which I have committed to.

The Social Outcomes

Throughout this research it has become apparent that positive social responses are key to upholding dignity for 'victims of violence', yet they are the exception rather than the rule. It has been interesting to note the varied responses that others outside our collective have had to our work, but more significant have been the respectful, supportive, understanding and overwhelmingly positive responses we have received within our collective, from other members. This section reflects on the social responses we offer each other, and that others make to our work.

Collective members reflections on WAI

Every year, as part of the Massey University Human Ethics requirements for this project, a summative assessment of WAI has been completed by collective members. These responses are always interesting and without fail are very positive. Completing a written assessment form is not an ideal method of gauging success – there are many pitfalls. Foremost is that the rules have changed – women who have chosen to participate in an art making collective are now being asked to respond in writing. It exposes things we may not have anticipated sharing in this space – things like our inner thoughts - but at a more basic level our spelling, and ability to articulate ourselves in a written format may feel scrutinised. The forms are helpful, however, in clarifying the validity and accuracy of the informal oral and written reflections which are made during the year, and they offer concrete comments to draw from in supporting the research findings. These reflections are voluntary and anonymous, but in a setting where we all know each other so well handwriting is familiar and identifiable. This appears not to bother members, as they often complete these in front of me, or talk about what they are writing with the collective as they write. I am aware that the women of WAI may not want to offend me by putting down negative comments, despite me stating that these offer useful ways forward and that I need to hear them. It appears however that for the most part the collective are content with how we function and interact – the undercurrents and telling comments of dissent are not present. Having an understood

kawa (our ways of doing things) and hui (meeting) processes that allow concerns to be aired offers a space for discussion and problem solving.

Having established the above understanding, some comments on WAI, taken from the summative assessment questionnaires, are recorded with permission below. These comments clearly demonstrate the importance of the relationships the women of WAI have developed with each other.

Describing the positive aspects of participation in the WAI collective:

"The women, creating and making amongst the most amazing, diverse, funny bunch of women. Strong women" (Keli J.)

"the people, the feelings. How nothing can matter but also everything can matter" (Belle)

"support, acceptance and the space to be authentic" (Lou)

"the companionship of beautiful, creative, courageous women"(C.J. Mahe)

"the people, the conversations, the 'realness' of others who get it" (Jo. S)

"Being part of a collective. Bouncing off each other" (Sash)

"Being with inspirational women. Sharing our journey" (M.E.)

Describing what working within the collective to make art has offered:

"WAI has offered me a space to be creative and expressive, with no hassle, judgement or need to "qualify". I wouldn't start a lot of projects that I started through WAI – but now I take them home and continue the creative process there" (C.J.Mahe).

"Provides a space for me to be. A space for me to create the art I want to make to speak to my experience of DV and the responses I have had from working in the DV field for 8 years. The things I have witnessed and heard" (Keli. J).

"Working with WAI has allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and has given me permission to paint my way – my 'heart' (M.E.).

"I can finally say, without censure, what I have been trying to say through my art for so long" (Jo.S)

Significantly while these responses describe the relationships and art making positively they don't describe the positive 'effects' that WAI has had on individual collective members' wellbeing. While our focus as a collective has been on affirming our voices and working towards social change there have also been some unexpected art making outcomes for participants. Three of the WAI PN collective members are undertaking further study in art and have all received scholarships, and one of our WAI wāhine (women) was a New Zealand finalist in the International Clifton's Art Award in 2016. Having the focus on a shared kaupapa and collective art making (rather than a focus on improving wellbeing through an art therapy approach) appears to offer us confidence in our ability as art makers too.

Sometimes the most telling reflection of success or failure is the engagement that women have. At WAI this varies immensely. WAI have an established core of women who have continued to come every week since its inception in 2013. We have women who come for a few months and then leave and we have women who engage from home because they cannot come into the studio. Some women leave and come back later when their situation or energy permits, and others come now and then when they feel like it or can manage it. We also have women who have come in more recently and have engaged boots and all, quickly establishing their place within the collective. Understanding 'engagement' and how to maintain this long term has not been a component of this research. To identify this component as an indicator of success would align what we do at WAI with social service approaches which require such data for the purposes of funding and client 'success' criteria.

As an ongoing inclusive collective there is the potential that WAI could become unwieldy – so large that resourcing and space cannot be managed long term, and solutions would need to be found. To date the diverse and sometimes sporadic nature of members' ways of interacting with us has only been positive. The collective embrace and include whoever is in our space on the day – something that I admire immensely as it requires women to manage varying dynamics, new faces, and different levels of resourcing, and space without notice. Allowing this space to be what it needs to be, for those who need it, when they need it, is crucial – it allows autonomy and respects the decisions that women make - as voluntary members of a collective, not as 'clients' within a social service.

Public responses to the artworks

Every year when our exhibition works are hung I listen to the people who are viewing them. This started as an inadvertent behaviour (more out of politeness than anything else) because I was so frequently approached when I was speaking at our openings, in the media, or just wandering around in the exhibition space checking on things. I am a public face for what is still, despite all of the work done, often an intensely private issue. I speak openly and honestly about the 13 years of abuse I experienced, and the ongoing social responses to this I receive. I flip as many deficits as I can in this process. Every time I speak about WAI and my own experiences, or identify with our collective, I am given back narratives of violence and resistance - often these have been secrets kept for many years. I see sadness, fear, pride and shame but, because of the way WAI promote ourselves and our work, I also see hope, connection, and a sense of relief in the eyes of those who have not forgotten and want to be heard by someone who understands. These narratives come from both genders, they come from all social and cultural groups, all ages, and higher education is no barrier to these disclosures. I am aware now that these conversations hold great weight and are an important part of activating our kaupapa. I still never feel I have the necessary competence to be the one that people disclose to, but I have learnt just to listen, and to offer the names and contact details of those better equipped should the person indicate this is what they want. I do believe that really allowing viewers to be heard, from a place that acknowledges

resistance, challenges deficits, and upholds dignity, is the most powerful and respectful way I can stand within the space that our exhibitions open.

Art as activism - does it work?

As a collective of artists who hope to bring about social change through our art making and exhibition processes we must address questions about the impact this kaupapa has had. The goal of our activism as a WAI collective has been to challenge oppressive entrenched myths and deficit understandings, and to bring about change in the way women who have experienced violence are perceived, represented and responded to. How do we determine if social change has occurred and if in fact our art has even had a part to play in this?

Duncombe (2016) believes that we must first be clear about our intentions, clarifying a set of acknowledged aims from a survey of activist artists. Many of these aims are pertinent to WAI. They include: fostering dialogue around uncomfortable or overlooked topics; building and maintaining community, creating 'places' where discussions and novel ways of being, thinking, and creating can happen; inviting participation and enabling the creativity and experimentation of others; transforming environment and experience; revealing reality, creating disruption, altering perception and inspiring dreaming; providing utility – useful tools or needed services; and the expression of political sentiment. Having goals is handy – we have a line to measure our degree of success against – but the activist aims outlined here are not always readily quantified and social change can be incremental and very slow to appear, so how can we assess our success? "Simply put, the artist shines a light *in* – what we might call intent – but what comes *out* is a spectrum of a/effect, and that is something the artist cannot entirely control for"(Duncombe, 2016, p. 128).

WAI have clearly met many of the intentions listed above – we have created a space and a place for a community of women who have experienced violence and abuse; we have a very different way of thinking and creating work around this discourse; and we activate critical

dialogue around this difficult topic in our community because of our artwork. Our studio offers practical tools for the artworks to be created and opportunities for our voices to be heard. Has this been enough to create social change? For the women who participate – yes. Together we have developed a way of thinking and working that shifts the realities we have been given as 'victims' of violence. For the public – we can only gauge the impact of our activism by the comments and narratives we are given back. These overwhelmingly offer 'others' opportunities to speak, to connect, and to see themselves and their responses to violence differently. The longer term social impact is almost impossible to gauge. Have we had an impact on the agencies, professionals, counsellors, the police, or even the perpetrators? I can only judge this from my own experience – art speaks to my heart, it asks me to do better, it sees who I really am, it is gentle, and it is challenging. If I engage then I take away something that stays with me in a way that I cannot explain. As artists we shine the light into complex and difficult discourses but the influence is variable – it is out of our control. We may see no difference, but change may be running through one agent in one organisation and the potential that this holds is immense. Our WAI art offers a doorway into new ways of thinking but change only happens when viewers step through that door.

Looking forward

Opportunities exist for the WAI model of practice to effectively translate across many different regions and social groups. The WAI collective see this model functioning well for children (Weeny WAI), Youth (no name yet), and women prisoners (WAI inside), and are keen to see these new collectives implemented. The model of practice framework given within this report offers space for such difference within safe and supportive constructs. Re-writing of the collective members' books for best use by collectives who are not solely adult women would be required, however the main tenets of the kaupapa would remain the same. Different knowledge would emerge and would be used to feed these new ways of working, in exactly the same manner as the WAI collective have established themselves to date.

The WAI model of practice works, but it is a useless tool if no one can access funding to implement it. Funding has proven to be the biggest hurdle in establishing and maintaining the collectives. The big decision will be how to take WAI forward in a way that allows me (as a mentor and caretaker) to hold down a paid job while still supporting the wider WAI Aotearoa collective. The time commitment to maintain the relationships and funding for one WAI collective is exponential, and the three collectives that are currently running could not do so without the real belief and hard work of those supporting each of them. I quail at the thought of attempting to support many collectives across many regions, but I can see see that the effort and funding required to get up and running without this support may be too much for many agencies who would otherwise choose to participate.

Taking WAI into the future, sustaining and nurturing this model that we know works is the next challenge. There are options to explore that require time, energy, and advice – and these are things that I will follow up on completion of my PhD. Taking WAI into the future will require focused thought and a great deal of energy. Six years of facilitation, and all that this has entailed has required immense, all-encompassing, and determined tenacity. While I do not resent one ounce of the effort I have given, I am tired of the worry, the constant battle for day to day funding, and the eternal setting aside of my own art making so that others can have what they need to make theirs - I recognise the need for succession. The 2017 year has been one of looking ahead and planning for sustainability. I have worked hard to awhi (foster) collective members into a shared facilitation role, to let go of my way of doing things, and my fierce protection of the intricacies of this space that has become so much more than just mine. I know that our kaupapa and the collective energy have a life of their own, and that I have done all I can for WAI PN as a facilitator. I am excited to see collective members stepping into this role and walking alongside WAI PN into the future. My role will change to that of mentor, allowing the time I need to address the WAI collective as a nationwide framework and to promote and support my model of practice at this level. Facilitating WAI has gifted me with deep and precious knowledge, and offered me a valued community. I look forward to participating in the WAI PN collective as an art maker, and to supporting the next chapter of WAI Aotearoa.

Chapter 7 the clarity of light, an exhibition of personal artworks in response to the research

"The marginalised and those who are committed to social justice at all levels of the research process want and need different kinds of knowledge and different and more congruent means by which to create it, or allow previously subjugated knowledge to emerge"

(Brown, and Strega, 2005, p.5)

A personal approach

If knowledge is light, and art is a form of knowledge production then artists are makers of light. Sometimes the horror and obscurity of these kinds of oppressive knowledge defy expression, but we respond as artists/ activists and women who have experienced violence, from a place of shared humanity and from our lived experiences. WAI offers a very specific conduit through which to promote our knowledge; a diverse and empowering way of sharing our light, our perspectives, our understandings and our identities. In working alongside this collective I have gathered in and refined my own knowledge and this has offered me light and protection within which to grow this body of knowledge and these artworks.

This chapter discusses my responses to the WAI research, through my art making. I respond to the WAI ways of self-representing identity, of flipping deficits and challenging the binaries inherent in the discourses of violence. I share my artistic reflections on our collectives' way of working with the most humble gratitude. They are only that – my reflections. Self-representation is key to the WAI kaupapa, so this body of artwork can only offer my understandings, through my lens. All that I have learned informs this narrative. How I identify, how I respond to the WAI kaupapa, is my representation. I do not speak for the collective through my work, but the collective – these talented and inspiring women, and all they have taught me, enriches and informs it.

My art making comes from this place of reflection – but it is not focused so much on refining and deepening my own artistic processes, although of course when I make work I am analysing and developing it in direct response to the kaupapa and materials. This body of work comes from within a space that we have created at WAI - a space of social justice, a space which asks for social change and that incorporates a collective making art together. I have spent my PhD focused on growing and supporting this art making collective, developing a model of practice that will work across difference, and challenging deficits. I have also spent a lot of time thinking about how all of this can be portrayed visually, and thinking and reflecting on my own thinking, understandings, biases, and participation within this collective. My art work visually enacts the research conclusions, the developed model of practice, and the way we have of working together in this collective.

> The issue here is not the status or provenance of the visual but the intellectual range and depth of the artist/researcher's thinking. This is thinking which is dependent on the artist's speculations about being in the world according to her/his determining vision of it; this is thinking which is determined by understanding the visual and by the power of that understanding. It is also thinking which is acted through, the enactment of thinking (McLeod and Holdridge, 2004, p.10).

I have many, many insights into who I am and how I function as an artist which I have gathered in as part of working within the WAI space. I know that the WAI collective care about me and the kaupapa we share but the research is <u>just</u> research to most of us – the focus is always on the making, the kaupapa, and the collective.

I have learned to respect my own lived knowledge and mahi (work) as much as anyone else's. Through WAI, I am part of a social justice response to violence that is so much bigger than just me as an individual artist, but my voice matters too. My work also deserves my time, respect, and care, and for me simple is effective – I don't need to try and be clever or overcomplicate the work – balance and the dialogue between elements matters. I have given myself permission to enjoy making beautiful things and to play a bit more - just like we do in the WAI studio. I believe beauty directly opposes the darkness of violence, and

sometimes the things that we do naturally and easily are our art, even if they aren't the art we think we are supposed to make. What I want to say through my work doesn't have to slap people (in fact that approach would counter everything I have learned). The dialogue can just sit within me and permeate quietly out however it comes – I don't have to control it so much, just share it. Challenges can be gentle.

Binaries sit in places that matter a great deal to all of us at WAI PN and therefore I choose to speak through and between them in my personal art making. There are crucial forms of knowledge that sit between representation and experience, between self-representation and representation by others, between our public and private realities, and between concepts as seen from outsider and insider perspectives. Importantly this research has identified the yawning space between binaries which are used to represent those who are seen as well and those who as perceived as less than well because they have experienced violence. Through this body of work I self-represent my response to eight chosen binary oppositions: fear/courage; shame/dignity; passive/active; anger/ resistance; guilt/ pride; hypervigilance/'normal' vigilance; disassociation/ association; and sadness/ joy. The following table [figure 43] offers an overview of the binaries represented in this body of work.

Negative representation – effects of violence on 'victims':	Pathologising discourses - inherent understandings in this concept	RBP/social context	Positive representation / WAI way of 'flipping deficits'
fear	Mental health – unreasonable fear and abnormal or irrational anxiety – requires medical intervention and therapy once the threat of physical harm is removed	There are real reasons to be afraid and these extend far beyond physical threat to the self – remove these and the fear and anxiety will most likely abate	Ensures protection and safety of ourselves and those we love. It takes great courage and strength to keep going in the face of real threat. Fear drives change
passive	Victim blaming, learned helplessness (Walker, 1980)	Whenever there is violence there is always resistance. We don't stay because we like violence or are too stupid to see what it does – we may stay because we have no independent finances, or because we have been threatened with further violence, the removal of our children, or death	We are active - we resist violence in many creative and subtle ways that are often unseen or unacknowledged because they don't stop the violence
anger	Mental health - crazy, unreasonable, impossible to help, a bad mother, confused. Or Victim blaming – seen as 'just as bad' as the perpetrator– needs anger management	Anger is a healthy response to oppression and violence. Women's anger may be used as a tool to provoke men's anticipated violence at safer times or in safer places	Anger drives resistance and social change, and is often used to protect women and children from further or more excessive violence.
sadness	Mental health – depressed, in need of medication and/ therapy	It is a healthy response to feel sad when we are treated badly	Mourning involves remembering and reclaiming what is ours
disassociation	PTSD - Medical - Trauma	Disassociation offers a form of resistance or protection from violence, when there are no other options.	Association/ the connections we maintain, protection of our essence, sanctuary.
hypervigilance	PTSD – Medical - Trauma	This is a way of protecting the self/ monitoring the safety of us and those around us	Fierce awareness and mindfulness for the purpose of protecting ourselves and others
shame	Mental health - in need of therapy, victim blaming	Women receive many negative social responses that pathologise, undignify and blame them.	Shifting shame to the perpetrator, acknowledging resistance, and offering positive social responses upholds dignity
guilt	Mental health - disabling	Negative social responses often blame victims, for 'failing to protect' our children, our homes, our relationships, our jobs, and our finances	Pride and dignity in our parenting, strengths, resistance, cultures, connections, choices, survival, and identity

Figure 43: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Table of Binaries Portrayed.* [Table].

There has been some conflict and questioning for me within this space, around the construction of the victim identity, and if by refusing therapy based interventions and insisting on making art in response to violence nearly twenty years since I left it, I have chosen to remain in this role. I believe I am defying this stasis by the challenge I give to the role of victim within my identity. In alignment with our WAI kaupapa, I choose not to be seen as one dimensional, as a victim or even a survivor, but as a whole, multi-dimensional, integrated person. Thirteen years of violence forms part of my life but I am not victimised by it – I choose not to give that power away, despite knowing that there are things I do and don't do, places I don't go, and things that have changed in me forever because of this violence. I have constantly reflected on and challenged the notions of my identity against this – a little along the lines of throwing everything out with the bathwater and then realising that some of the stuff I had thrown out was mine, it was good, and I wanted it back. I threw almost everything out because I didn't know what was true anymore yet I have kept some things that I know are a direct response to these experiences and to my hurt. Why? They keep me safe, for some reason I want some of it – I want to remember and to tread carefully in some places, because this keeps those I love safe.

Yes - I experienced violence – my body, my heart, my self-concept, and my identity have been hurt by this, but my mind has always held me safe, and it continues to do so. Am I balanced? Do I continue to respond to this historic violence nearly twenty years later? Yes to both questions - we are all products of our histories and our ancestors. Mine have shown me adversity but also given me a way of responding that has allowed me to maintain my sanity and my dignity, to hold my head up and respect my experiences as things I have responded to, learned from, integrated into my way of being, and which have driven me to academic rigour and social justice approaches to art making. Would I benefit from talking about this stuff? I talk all the time about it through my work, and with those I know and trust – many of them are even social workers, therapists, and advocates. I have an informed analysis, and understand what happened intellectually, but more importantly I have learned to trust my instincts around this. To trust myself and my own process – and that is no easy task when violence has taught me to doubt everything about who I am and how I function

and appear in the world. I didn't see myself as a victim even when I was living with violence and abuse everyday – I was still always me. Just me – being hurt and humiliated, me being violated, confused, and intimidated, me responding through creativity, me resisting with every tool I could find. Me - protecting my children and my wider family, me - sad, angry, and confused…..not a victim – a person. Someone.

My experience of being well, of being autonomous, and knowing my own power, has been through the process of creativity – growing children and gardens, making cakes, a safe home, and art, learning about violence, and working within the WAI collective have all helped me pull apart and reframe my understandings and identity in a way that allows me to stand my ground on this point and to trust my own hard won knowledge. This approach has informed my focus as an artist – I would rather be working collectively with others (in an art making, non-therapy setting) to promote social justice, than just focusing on my own work, although I love the privilege of making alone too. I struggle with the often elitist 'world' that is constructed around art, and with the commodification of the outcomes of a process that is for me deeply integrated with personal experience. The 'art world' is not a place I am very comfortable inhabiting – I don't much like the exposure working within it brings me personally and I don't like the 'closed' knowledge that can separate art from everyday people. However, I have chosen to work within this public space to promote the social justice aims of our collective. I imagine making art within a community like this may not be the preferred approach for someone writing a PhD in Creative Arts, but this personal, collective, and justice based approach is how WAI has worked – and it does work.

In choosing to work outside more conventional individualised approaches to being an artist I have had to challenge and re-frame my own understandings of what this role means to me and to recognise how working in a collective way has changed me as both a maker and a person. Admittedly collective art making is a diverse approach for an introvert – which I am, utterly and completely – but falling into the role of facilitator happened because I care deeply about others who experience violence and abuse. Most of my own art work is still

done alone at home, between funding applications and WAI administration, simply because the WAI studio is so busy with requests, interruptions, and distractions that I can't just be in my own head. However, the women of WAI are always with me when I make art – in my approaches and thinking. I am braver and less considered because I am part of the WAI collective, and I trust myself more as an artist and a person. I have created a world around me that is safe, but darkness sits here too, and I acknowledge that. As a woman who has experienced violence I stand before you and ask you to see me the way I choose to self-represent – as a compilation of all of my experiences, everyone I know, and all I believe to be true. I ask you to see my light.

If I am a drawing of threads then my art work is also. It has taken me a long time to realise that I will never be an individual 'artist as genius', whose singular focus is on one media area. I work like I am – something we all do – and who I am seems to require a 'Jack of all trades' approach, with the media responding to my kaupapa and the people around me, who are always my driving force. My creativity folds around my garden, family, home, and WAI, around making clothing, kai (food), and useful 'things'. While my work is definitely conceptual I appear to be less of a 'fine' artist, and more of an artisan – a maker. However, even as a maker or artisan I struggle to find my place without the required technical proficiency and practice in one area, although the focus of this body of work has honed my skills and developed an intense interest in glass painting and lead lighting. I don't want a debate around art versus craft in this context - it doesn't matter to me where my work is seen to fit. It matters that it challenges oppression and injustice, it matters that it allows other women to see themselves as bodies of light, not heavy, dirty stones, it matters that people talk about violence openly. My work is my voice, my conduit, my resistance to violence, my form of social activism, my response to the binaries inherent in this body of research.

Materials

The Wardrobes

"Does there exist a single dreamer of words who does not respond to the word wardrobe?"

(Bachelard & Jolas, 2014, p.99)

I am unable to completely unravel the fascination that I have with the wardrobe. As a child my wardrobe was the place I could hide the mess I managed to create in my room, when my parents insisted I tidy it. It was a cosy space to sit in with a book, or hide in if I needed to. Precious things were tucked away in here. It held none of the fear for me that the space beneath my bed did. For me the wardrobe is congruent with identity – it is a receptacle of those things that are me. It is a bodily space that we can fill. It holds belongings we use to publicly demonstrate our identity, but equally it offers refuge to our secrets. It has a front and a back but, as with most binaries, the mystery lies in the space between these. As an adult (whose possessions now require an entire house) this private space has come to represent my innermost sanctuary, my most intimate space within my home – a space that I allow very few people to intrude on. For me the wardrobe acts as a metaphor which "gives concrete substance to an impression that is difficult to express" (Bachelard & Jolas, 2014, p.95). It is this space that I choose to work with because it physically represents the metaphorical space of my interior. My interior space has held my narrative, it has been the space that I come from in this work. It has been the space where I challenge the deficits that I have been given by society to help me understand my experiences. Those things I have been told I must have stored - guilt, fear, shame, disassociation, passivity, anger, hypervigilance, and sadness. Things that I bought into, because they are socially accepted discourses that sit all around me. I choose to bring these mouldy, dysfunctional constructions out into the light through this work. I examine them, de-construct them, and replace them with my own constructions. I do not aim to restore or repair what has been lost or injured, I aim to reclaim what is mine. In reclaiming I reintegrate, I shift things from the margins to the centre, I prioritise my own knowledge, my ancestors' knowledge, knowledge connected to this colonised space, and knowledge intrinsically linked to WAI. It is my movement of these knowings that matters. My internal process is driven by an old,

wobbly, hand-drawn map; passed down, folded many times, and worn at the edges. Many of the roads are not clear, and many new roads are not even recorded yet. I am not driven by the full colour 300 page guide book others have offered to help me. It is an intimidating process to follow the humble, soft, vaguely remembered, uneven pathway on this old map but I choose it. I draw my own path on this map as I walk. One day others may need it.

There are 8 wardrobes in this installation. Each wardrobe represents both a binary concept (eg: hyper/ 'normal' vigilance) and an era when positive change occurred for women (eg: in 1974 the first Women's Refuge opened in Aotearoa New Zealand). The style of the wardrobes has been loosely chosen to link with the era they portray. Each wardrobe has glass inserts on both its front and back sides. The oval glass backs represent the oppressive, deficit portrayals of the concept chosen, while the painted, leaded glass fronts portray the binary – the positive or flip side of the concept - my personal representation. Glass rondels are also tucked within the body of each interior space – these contain a text element in the form of poems which link to each wardrobe. Collaboratively created clothing pieces hang in the space between these binaries of front and back, representing the lived social experience which lies in the space between all binary oppositions, and honoring the importance of relationships and the collective approach to art making that we take at WAI.

Wardrobes are practical, functional and beautiful. They take up space like a body, and they offer space. We interact with them physically. They have a presence. As objects they fit well with my kaupapa of creating research that is useful, simple, and offers protection and dignity.

Glass

"I have found the beauty of glass to be the perfect counterpoint to ugly and difficult subjects"

Judith Schaechter (in Wolf, 2017. para. 3).

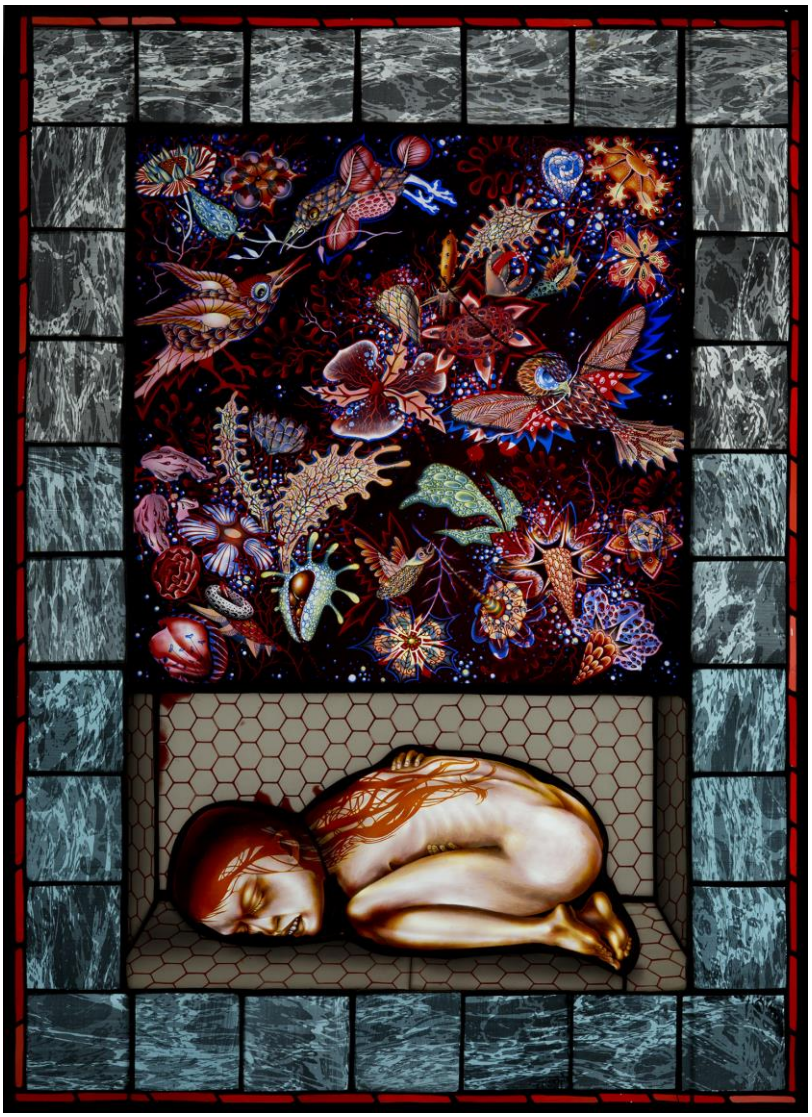


Figure 44: Schaechter, J. (2015). *Anchoress.* [Stained and etched glass]. Retrieved from: http://www.judithschaechter.com/

Glass has an intimate connection with light. My resistance to the violence I experienced has been light that allowed me growth. It has offered me enlightenment and a way of knowing myself and connecting to others. If "grief has great light" (Pule, 1993, p.9) then it makes sense that my grief and resistance are intimately connected, they form the lamp that leads me into this body of work. Glass for me is a pathway for light, transformation, growth, and

transparency. Glass sits in windows, protecting us but also separating us from those outside. We drink from it, medicate from it, we look through it, and use it to illuminate our environments. In many ways glass is as invisible as oppression – it sits all around us but we don't often see it. Instead it becomes a lens that we see the world through, acting as a binary because it is at the same time everywhere and nowhere in its complexity and contradiction.

Glass has an ancient history. The earliest glass objects date from Egypt and Mesopotamia in the 15th century BC. Of interest here is the later use of glass in stained glass windows which became a narrative art form that allowed buildings to "speak through their imagery" (Raguin, 2013, p.53). From the 12th Century these conversations commonly took place within places of worship. Stained glass windows offered a novel and seductive way of promoting clerical power, piety, faith, and (due to the expense) they also acknowledged the social rank and privilege of those who commissioned them. They proclaimed lineage and the right to rule over others, ensured access to property rights and denoted devotion to saints. They were viewed as a method of enlightening the masses, who were mostly unable to read biblical texts, and they worked to ensure social control, as "artists consistently sought to appeal to the hearts and minds of the unsophisticated viewer with images that elicited empathy" (Raguin, 2013, p.45).

Stained glass is still primarily associated with churches and great houses and it continues to have an "almost mystical relationship that it establishes with light, bringing images to life" (Barral, 2007, p.203). The contemporary stained glass work of Judith Schaechter [figure 44] questions the routinely pictured spiritual and didactic expressions of life in traditional stained glass. While Schaechter's work capitalises on the beauty of light as it shines through coloured glass, the contemplation offered is far less heavenly and much more visceral. She juxtaposes the inherent light of glass, with the darkness of her secular subject matter, in this way both utilising and confronting our mystical obsession with stained glass. (Schmitz, 2013).

Glass is a medium that is seen as fragile, brittle, vulnerable to damage, and able to inflict harm. However, in working with it I have learnt a deep respect for the transformative qualities of this medium. Glass will break, but it can be re-formed. It can be taken to tremendous temperatures and will emerge molten, glowing, and thickly runny like honey. It can be cut, fused, poured, stretched, ground, shaped, polished, and pooled. It can form dense, solid objects. Glass can be etched, painted, enameled, and stained to alter the way we see through it. As a medium it perfectly reflects both the way we are seen and represented as fragile, broken, vulnerable 'victims of violence' and the way the WAI collective choose to see ourselves as fluid, multi-faceted, transformative, whole, beautiful, strong women.

In prioritising this medium I choose to open unseen spaces, to address the intimate, the ignored, the invisible, the pieces, and the private. As with traditional stained glass I aim to elicit empathy, to appeal to hearts and minds, show layers of meaning and construction, and to transform ways of seeing. As a tool of oppression glass was used to exercise power, I choose to use this tool to expose and shift power and to contradict negative representations of women who have experienced violence.

The potential that glass holds to injure those who handle it, carefully responds to this kaupapa – I know that WAI opens painful and deeply personal spaces for me as a collective member and a researcher, and for all of the women who choose to be involved. These spaces must be handled carefully for us all or we risk harm and exposure. Glass reflects the burden of care and gentleness that is required in sharing these precious knowledge and in opening these hidden or unseen spaces (wāhi ngaro) for reflection. It also portrays the light of our knowledge, our wisdom and our proficiencies.

Poetry

"I learned how to live through adversity in the library. I learned how words and music can empower you, show you the world in a sharper, cleaner, more forgiving way"

(Wagamese, R. 2008, p.93)

Reading was not seen as a threatening behaviour by the man who controlled and limited my life for 13 years. I have always read voraciously. Books have been places of enlightenment, safety, and escape for me throughout my life. Within this relationship they became oxygen, peace, and a place where kindness and respect could exist. They offered me insight, hope, and the power of knowledge. Reading became a form of resistance; a bubble of clarity, sense, and protection for my spirit in a place of infinite darkness and confusion. Poetry garnered a special place in my heart. For me poems are like artworks - their lyrical expressions touch me in an embodied way. I respond from a place of knowing, not a place of thinking. Linking poetry to each of these artworks allows me to explore my understandings in greater depth, it has given me a sense of connection to others, and offers viewers of my works a way in to understanding them. The use of text within these works also refers to the WAI way of using printed words to create clarity.

Fabric

"The impact of IPV emotional abuse becomes woven into the very fabric of a woman's existence and the meaning she attaches to the experience"

(Queen, Nurse, Brackley and Williams, 2009, p.243)

My relationship with fabric and sewing stems from my relationships with significant women in my life. My mother sews, makes patchwork quilts, crochets, and knits; my maternal grandmother did also, and my paternal grandmother crocheted everything from cut up bread bags to kitchen towels. Evidence of these skills sits everywhere in my home and my psyche. I still have the old singer sewing machine that my Nana used. As a teenager, I learned to sew on this, peddling away on the foot treadle to keep the needle chugging along. When my children were small I took great pride in sewing everything they wore on a sewing machine that my mother was given for her 21st birthday. I sewed my own clothing also. I developed a cobbled approach to sewing that allowed me to recreate clothes I liked in magazines by adapting patterns and cutting directly from bought clothes. I have made patchwork quilts for my children and more recently for my granddaughter, and now my youngest daughter sits at the sewing machine asking for my advice and help. This material creativity did not challenge my abusers control. Viewed as a gender-acceptable and money saving activity, it was sanctioned. I took this permission and ran with it, creating items that communicated my love and pride – resisting him fiercely, while calmly appearing to comply. When I look back now I realise that I never sewed anything for my ex-partner, not even a quilt for the bed we shared.

Creating with fabric has always been an activity I have learned from and participated in with other women: my grandmothers, my mother, my ex-husband's cousin, my best friend, my art school friends, my daughters. I associate these women with sewing, knitting, crochet, weaving, and fabric sculpture; with patience, rich conversation, life-lessons, laughter, and care. My son is in here too – as a four year old he would perch alongside the sewing machine to watch me sew, handing me pins and fiddling with knobs.

The process of creating from fabric and wool is deeply nourishing for me and I have a magpie approach to collecting beautiful old fabrics when I op shop. I recognise something in the wear and history of old fabric that I respond to. Fabric has formed part of my understanding of who I am. I have a particular love of velvet – there is something sensuous and luxurious about this fabric that has led me to purchase numerous (six that I am admitting to) velvet jackets. It is a fabric which offers its own sense of dignity. It is a fabric that has a history of tactile sensuality – something that I often find disconcerting when wearing it in public, as complete strangers will stroke my clothing with the excuse that it is beautiful - in touching Hartzell (2009) believes we articulate our innate desire to possess.

Used as a lining fabric for boxes, drawers and coats and as a cover for furniture, windows and (less often initially) bodies, velvet became synonymous with sumptuous interiority and was associated with the wealthy and privileged. Sumptuary laws protected its use and display and contributed to velvet's mystique and exclusivity. Interior fabrics, like velvet, "served as material evidence of the multiple acts of physical possession by which middle-class western identity was constructed and represented" (Sidlauskas 2000, p.25). In the 1830s manufacture of "double velvet" allowed increased production, reduced costs, and offered the western 'middle class' a more affordable product, which could then be translated into clothing. Velvet offers this internal body of work depth, intimacy, and softness. It provides a strong contrast to the degraded and stained cottons, speaking inherently of dignity, power, and possession. In this union the power is mine – I choose where and how to apply it.

Contrasting the sumptuousness of velvet is degraded cotton, silk and synthetic material – fabric that is worn, old, damaged, torn, and stained. Degradation speaks directly of "the textiles ability to remember" (Hemmings 2012, p.59) and it can form part of a "serious conversation about violence and the role of cloth as a record keeper of the violated body" (p. 59). It holds a visible record of memory; accidents, daily living, and bodily functions. We are imprinted upon the fabric we wear. Stains and tears mark those who wear them, they

are hard to hide, and they elicit shame, whether they are self-inflicted (bodily fluids and functions), or inflicted upon us - they mark us as discernable and different. Violence stigmatises us, blames us, intrudes on us, and stains us. It reproaches and silences us. 'In botany, the word stigma is used to describe the part of the pistol which is the receptacle for pollen in impregnation; that is, the female region of the plant. Stigma is continually socialized as a female condition" (Hemmings 2012, p. 61). Stigma, shame and degradation form part of this material dialogue. Symbolically this union of contrasts, of luxurious velvet and worn cotton, reflects our WAI way of flipping deficits.

Textiles offer cultural, social, and political influence. They can help us understand and communicate our identity and our place in the world. For many women, working with textiles has offered a conflicting space of both restraint and resistance. Today artists utilise the association of fabric, patterning, stitching, piecing, and sewing with 'women's work' to challenge female stereotypes and to speak about issues relevant to women's lives. The act of making our own clothing has also been used by many women to respond ethically to the often highly unethical mass production of much of what we wear today. Sewing in a contemporary sense can also offer a challenge to what may be termed a gendered binary of technology, one in which "we don't think of women's activities as technology, even when that's exactly what they are" (Bain, 2016, p.61).

The fabrics chosen and the forms of clothing they take within these wardrobes speak to a long discourse of women's struggle against oppression. They relate to specific sites of resistance, to moments and people that have effected change, to the women who have collaborated with me to create them, and they are deeply personal. Each fabric item is discussed individually within the wardrobe contexts.

Symbolism

The body

Violence against women is not an abstract concept. It is has an ominously physical presence. Violence is enacted upon us – upon our minds, our hearts, and our bodies. It damages our relationships and our homes. It harms our children, pets, and wider family and effects the social world we live in. As 'victims of violence' we are often invisible – unseen, unheard, and unasked. Our bodies are viewed as sites of injury and trauma – they are visible receptacles of our shame and 'brokenness' – and therefore it is assumed that 'seeing' these bodies will be painful. Using parts of the body, the face, the hands, the feet, and the bones, in these stained glass works offers visibility to the many ways of being, and the resistance, strength, and agency that women consistently demonstrate in situations of violence. Offering these representations allows different connections to be made to a real person, and offers a challenge to the status quo – to deficit concepts of passivity, disconnection, and disassociation.

Plants

I am a gardener. I come from a long line of women who garden. I have half an acre of vegetable and flower gardens so I weed a lot - and this offers a unique perspective on the way that things grow. When you are low to the earth pulling out weeds you notice root systems, growth habits, fragrances, and the unique attributes of plants. A language of sorts develops. I have my favourite plants and they do appear in my work often – especially the rose, as it is a symbol that I use to represent my resistance to violence. A family name on my fathers' side is Thorne and I relate to the protection, covering, and inherited strength of family through the symbol of the thorn alongside the rose. I have been able to resist violence because I have been offered this shelter.

These stained glass and fabric works are a little different as I am choosing to focus more on those plants generally considered weeds. Weeds are the lowly undesirable cousins of the plants we choose for our gardens, but they are often in fact just plants that have different, less commendably viewed growth habits. They are often incredibly tenacious, productive, resistant, and adaptive, surviving in places that other plants cannot. They remind me of myself and of all of the women I have met through the WAI journey.

Birds and bugs

Often birds and bees are seen as intermediaries, as representatives of the soul, or as messengers between the living and the dead (Barbe-Gall, 2007; Carr-Gomm, 2001). These analogies sit comfortably within these works. For me bees also represent the industry and fortitude of my forebears, and acknowledge the link between many generations. I often use birds to represent myself and my children, and to speak of freedom, joy, and autonomy.

Order/ disorder

Mental health 'abnormalities' are often seen as 'disorders' and may be described using terms which identify deficit and 'unbalanced' thinking, behaviour, and responses. Chaotic home lives or relationships are also frequently identified when explaining the circumstances surrounding violence against women.

Order is seen as rational, balanced, and healthy. We find symmetry calming. Regular patterns create order but may also, critically, be seen to reflect entrenched colonial controls and the containment of land and people (Sio-Atoa, 2015). The glass works presented in these wardrobes offer harmony and symmetry as a method to beguile and draw in viewers, and to positively represent the concepts discussed. However, on careful inspection, there are subtle imbalances – opposing sides may hold the same shaped glass but in vaguely

different colours, a few pieces have cracks right through them, some of the lead is doubled up, and the imagery imperceptibly subverts complete symmetrical balance. Through indirectly challenging controlled equilibrium I offer my resistance to what is deemed 'acceptable'.

Colour

A very deliberate approach to colour combinations has been taken throughout these stained glass works. In response to the WAI way of using colour, I have not restricted this to a limited palette across the overall body of stained glass windows, however each wardrobe individually relies on the use of mostly analogous and harmonious tonal colour combinations. Painting each wardrobe white has offered a way of creating coherence, and attempting to shift the impression from that of a potential jumble sale to a more unified body of work, where the glass is the focus. Developing a sense of harmony and calm in these works offers viewers a more gentle way in to each narrative – they are enticed rather than confronted or challenged. Choosing to positively represent my responses to these binaries through the use of coloured glass allows me to create work that may evoke a very different response to the alternative representations offered.

The Art Making Processes

The glass processes

A range of different approaches were used to create the glass works, these include: stained glass; digital imaging; and casting. These processes are briefly described below.

The Stained Glass Process

Although I majored in glass in my undergraduate degree, through UCOL in Whanganui, I had very little experience working in stained glass, and I had certainly never tried painting and firing it before this body of work. Needless to say the processes involved in creating these stained glass panels have been a steep learning curve and You Tube has been invaluable! My go-to guy at the initial stages of the project was Greg Hall, a stained glass artist from Whanganui who I worked with a little during my time over there. Greg offered invaluable advice and guidance as I ricocheted about conceptually before settling on the ideas presented. He suggested contacts for supplies, suitable resources, and reminded me of techniques I had learned from him during my time at UCOL. Without his patience in answering my endless questions I would never have had the courage to tackle such a formidable body of work in this medium.

The process of creating stained glass leaded panels is labour intense and time-consuming. It is physically arduous, dirty, and demanding. There are many processes which are briefly outlined below. Please note this is my way of working –and may not necessarily be the 'right' way of undertaking stained glass.

1. Create a drawing / pattern onto drafting paper – this sounds simple but as I have discovered it is far from the easy part. The style of drawing and patterning chosen impacts on almost every process that follows. After wrestling with the first two windows I have the following sage advice to offer: it has helped me to think about the placement of the key images within the window plane first before drawing up the lead line patterns. Secondary elements can then be placed within/ across the frames these lines offer [Figure 45]. A drawing style that is quite graphic is easiest to translate across onto the glass.

Figure 45: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Pattern drawing].

2. Take two patterns of the lead lines, also on drafting paper, from the drawing. One pattern is used to cut the glass to the correct shapes and sizes and the other is kept whole, and used to keep the pieces in their correct position during the leading up process. Label each pattern piece with a number and the colour/type of glass it will be cut from. Cut the first pattern up into pieces, carefully cutting along each side of the 2mm width black marker lines. Removing this small black strip [figure 47] ensures that the lead will fit correctly between the pattern pieces.

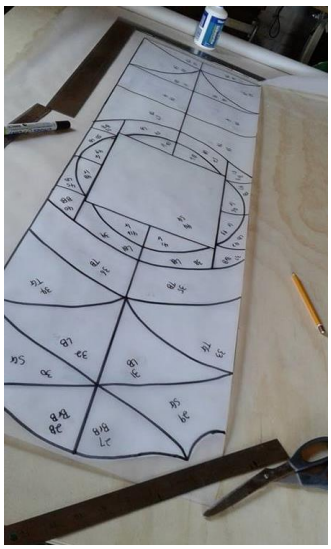
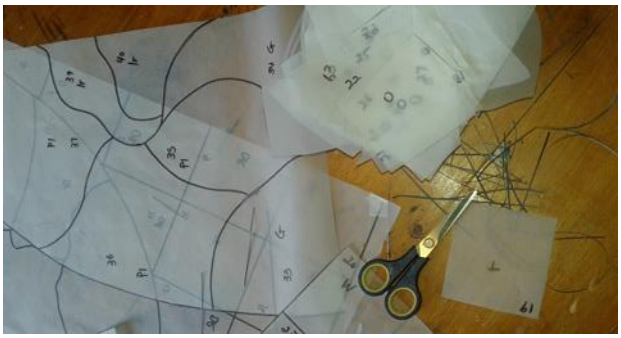


Figure 46: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Cutting pattern].

3. Apply double sided tape to each pattern piece and adhere to the glass to be cut. Using a glass cutter score around the shape and apply pressure along the score line to cut the piece. Grind each cut edge on every piece of glass, using a glass grinder. Clean the glass. Lay the glass out onto the second pattern to await painting.



Figures 47 & 48: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Glass cutting process].

4. Glass painting is completed on a lightbox to enable effective tracing of the drawing pattern. Reusche paint from America was used – this comes as a powder which requires mixing with Gum Arabic (for adherence) and water to create the paint. A blend of black and brown powders was used. The glass painting process is undertaken in up to 6 built up layers on both sides of the glass. The glass painting process followed is one which is licensed to Williams and Byrne Glass Studio in the United Kingdom. The guide books for this process may be purchased online (Williams and Byrne, 2017)

Figure 49: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Palette].

I would highly recommend the small investment as this process offers explicit and in depth tutelage of the glass painting and firing processes. I found these guides invaluable as there are very few glass painters working in Aotearoa.

5. Once the glass painting is complete the pieces are laid onto beds of whiting (chalk) in mild steel trays and placed on shelves into the kiln. The firing schedule is one which Greg Hall recommended and which works well. The kiln is programmed to climb up at 75 degrees Celsius an hour to a top temperature of 675 degrees Celsius. There is a 30 minute hold at this temperature to soak the paint – which is necessary as my technique uses a lot of 'flooding'(large areas of paint) which need more time to fire in well, then the kiln goes off and is allowed to cool slowly down to room temperature.

Figure 50: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted glass ready to be fired].

6. When the glass is completely cool it is laid back onto the pattern (figure 51). A squared corner is used to lay out the outside (10mm) corner lead lines. 5mm lead is cut to the correct sizes and pinned into place on the glass pieces with horseshoe nails. Once all the lead is cut and the glass is held in its final position the work can be soldered on both sides (figure 52).

Figure 51: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fired glass].

Figure 52: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Leading and soldering].

7. The final step is to cement the lead on both sides of the window – this ensures weather tightness. Lead putty is forced into the channels of lead on both sides of the window using a small stiff brush. Whiting is brushed over this and then it is allowed to set up or firm [figure 53] before the excess putty is cleaned away using a sharp stick. Blacking may be done at this point if this is required.

Figure 53: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Cement / putty drying].

It has been no simple task to learn the process of painting onto glass, and my progress can be clearly seen in the works themselves, as I have learned along the way. While I understand that it is generally good practice to present only those works which best demonstrate refined technique I deliberately choose to exhibit the entire body of works as this is both conceptually important and it sits within our WAI ethos of the message mattering more than the medium.

Digital Imaging onto Glass

This process is a commercial one, with the oval glass being both cut and printed by glass and printing companies. High quality images were required. Photographs were taken and digitally manipulated using a programme called Picmonkey (which is much more user-friendly than Photoshop) to create the layered imagery presented in Chapter Seven, within each of the wardrobes. Rondels (rounds) were also cut and printed with text in the same way.

Presenting the digital oval images as windows in the wardrobes required some compromise in 'normal' glass printing practices. Generally the image is printed on the reverse side of the glass and a white background flood coat is over-printed on the same side, ensuring a crisp result with a shiny clear glass front face. Because I wanted light to pass through these images into the wardrobe space, and required the images to 'blend in' with the semi-gloss paintwork (rather than be glaringly obvious), new processes were developed. A 75% opacity print of the digital image was laid down on the outside of the glass and a 20% opacity flood coat of white was printed over the entire back (on the inside of the wardrobe), creating a more matt finish which pulls back and softens the image, while still allowing it to be seen.

Conceptually this muting of the image is important, as portrayals of violence are often socially uncomfortable and therefore we choose to 'not see' them – they are integrated into

the fabric of society in ways that allow us to function around them, sometimes only seeing them when we take the time to look, or when we are forced to by circumstance. Adding to this softening effect is the sense of age, distress, and wear that a scratched overlay and greyscale palette has added to each work. Interestingly the inside presentations of these negative portrait representations (within the wardrobes – which I view as the space of our lived experience) are diffused but they do remain present – impacting into this deeply personal space, offering us a 'socially acceptable' way of seeing ourselves as we are often seen from the outside.

It is important to note here that I am the model depicted in all of these images, as I had no desire to compromise anyone else's experiences or safety by asking them to be photographed or reproduced in this context. I am both uncomfortable and comfortable being exposed in this way.

The glass casting process was a collaborative endeavor with Kate Dobbs, a Whanganui glass artist who I worked with in 2010 and 2011 as part of my Bachelor in Fine Arts. The wooden chair chosen [figure 54] had many parts, therefore technical, practical, and conceptual decisions were made around the construction of this in glass. A lost wax process was used – this is briefly described below.

Figure 54: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Chair for casting].

The chair was taken apart and silica moulds were made for each of the pieces chosen for wax casting [figures 55 and 56]. Each chair part was coated in vaseline before having acetic cure silica applied in layers. The silica was allowed to harden and a supportive plaster casing was made for each mould. Heated wax was then poured into each empty mould, creating an exact replica of the original chair part.

Figure 55: Seccombe, K. & Dobbs, K. (2017). [Wax moulding process].

Figure 56: Seccombe, K. & Dobbs, K. (2017). [Wax moulding process].

The cold poured waxes were unmoulded then coated in a plaster silica shell, almost completely encasing them, with openings where the glass would be included. The molds were then steamed to remove the wax, leaving a hollow core the negative shape of the chair part.

Figure 57: Seccombe, K. & Dobbs, K. (2017). [Wax moulding process].

Crushed clear glass was placed into the empty cavities in the moulds and these were set up in the kiln. Firing of the glass was long and slow (72 hours) to ensure cracking did not occur. David Traub (a Whanganui Glass maker) allowed us the use of his kiln.

Cold working was undertaken after the glass was unmoulded. Due to budget this was kept to a minimum, with David Traub and Kate Dobbs finishing the glass to a smooth, but not highly polished or transparent, finish. Cold working refers to finishing techniques of cutting, dremelling, polishing and linishing glass to develop the clarity of surface areas. Cast glass has a 'haze' or opacity which gives it an almost white/ rough effect when it is left unpolished.

The chair was then finished by gluing together the glass and wooden parts to re-create the original design. UV glue was used to bond glass to glass, and a two part epoxy resin was used to bond the wood to the glass. The use of intermixed glass and existing wooden parts was mostly a technical decision made to ensure the cost of the work was kept down (it required less casting glass, mould making, steaming out, and cold-working time), and that it would be strong enough to withstand someone actually sitting on it.

The Wardrobes

Eight different wardrobes from various eras were collected. One of these wardrobes belongs to my middle daughter, five were bought on Trade Me and in op shops, and two were gifted to me by friends. Each wardrobe, being very different, required individualised problem solving. All of the wardrobes had their light wood original backs removed. These were replaced with heavier MDF (medium density fibre board) backs, with oval holes die cut into them (with a 5mm rebate) for the photographic oval glass inserts. Drawer bottoms were also replaced to enable circle cut outs and rebates to be made for the glass poem rondels to be inserted.

Figure 58: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Wardrobe showing removed mirror and oak panels].

Most of the wardrobes had mirrors and light oak inserts on the fronts which were removed, providing a useful and natural space for the stained glass panels [figure 58].

Two of the wardrobes also had extra panel holes cut to allow extra stained glass panels to be inserted as required for the stained glass pattern designs developed [figure 58].

Figure 59: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Wardrobe showing side panels to be removed].

Two other wardrobes [figures 58 and 59] had hollow core doors which were completely removed and re-made to the original door pattern from solid ply to allow panel holes and rebates to be cut to the design chosen. Two of the wardrobes also had feet added to ensure the height variation between wardrobes was not too overt.

Figure 60: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Original hollow core doors showing design in chalk].

Figure 61: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Original hollow core doors showing design in chalk].

All of the wardrobes were sanded back and spray painted using a stain block undercoat and three coats of a water based black white topcoat (for better coverage of the flaws in the wood). MDF edges were brush painted for coverage (as these 'wick' up sprayed paint which disappears rapidly).

The collaborative fabric works

Creating fabric works with different women and bringing these together within a body of personal works is my challenge to the individualised practice which is commonly accepted as a way in to a Creative Arts PhD. Inspired by Judy Chicago's 1974 - 1979 collaborative work *The Dinner Party* [Figure 62](Gerhard, 2013), this approach acknowledges the importance of interpersonal relationships, the social world around us, and the lived experience of working within the WAI collective for social change. Presenting these collaborative works within the personal artworks demonstrates that I do not stand alone in the process of earning myself a higher degree – many, many people are part of the knowledge that I share in this space. I honour and acknowledge their contributions through these collaborative works.

Figure 62: Chicago, J. (1974-1979). [Sculpture]. In Gerhard, J.F.(2013). *The Dinner Party : Judy Chicago and the power of popular feminism, 1970-2007*. Athens : The University of Georgia Press, [2013].

Each fabric work is presented within one of the wardrobes and therefore has a kaupapa attached to it. Creating these works has been a process of negotiation and has been

responsive to the established relationship I have with each of these woman, and to the strengths and understandings that she brings with her. Our shared approach to the work made is discussed individually within each of the wardrobes, but in keeping with my ethical approach to this research I have discussed only those understandings that will not unduly expose intimate aspects of our kōrero (discussion) or kaupapa.

While what my collaborators and I have done with fabric could (and may easily) be classified as dressmaking, and therefore be benevolently seen as nostalgic, or more critically as a form of 'regressive conservatism' (Bain, 2016), the work stands instead as 'art', because I choose to present it within an exhibition. Most of the fabric items presented are wearable, and some have been worn by me or the people I love. What they are offers an active challenge to what they are not. Every item of clothing presents women's activity and engagement, and our physical presence, from birth to old age and across eras. Clothing may just hang in the space of the wardrobe but it holds an energy which embodies both its makers and its wearers. It holds the memory of directed and mindful construction, of movement, of bodily and social responses, and living. These lived items challenge deficit perspectives of women as passive or inactive in response to violence. Indeed, "home dressmaking deserves to be examined for its politics, and should not be dismissed as a passive or retrograde nostalgia but rather recognised as [a] well-dressed contemporary form of feminist practice" (Bain, 2016, p.65).

Installation

Violence against women and children takes up space. It sits in a place in society that is increasingly public, yet is still intensely private. For those who live with violence it looms larger than life, confronting and containing them daily. It isolates and marginalises, separating 'victims' from 'others'. Those outside learn to tactfully navigate our way around these social disjuncture's, so as to avoid unnecessary offence, interference, or injury, or in an effort to protect the dignity of those involved. These discourses sit around us, impact on

our interactions, trouble and unnerve us, and we usually don't talk about the responses that we have to them. We see violence all the time in the media but often miss it right around us. The stigma, shame and entrenched stereotypes associated with 'victims' may lead us to walk by, rather than acknowledge this perceived stain.

Installation of these works is necessary. It allows spaces to exist, relationships to happen, and a sense of the bodily. We can move around at our will, open doors, navigate fronts and backs and sit and view the whole. We have autonomy in this space. There are many aspects, many ways of viewing and many layers of meaning. We interact physically with the artworks that confront us.

It was intended that these 8 wardrobes would tuck into the beautifully curved alcoves along each side of St. Andrews church in Palmerston North. Protected and 'held' within the body of the church, the placement of these works would reflect the psychological placement I allow them within this community – one my mother has participated in for nearly forty years. I am no longer a regular churchgoer, but I belong when I am there. I have memories of the sun floating through the windows, of knowing the rhythm of the service, and the hymns, of watching the sun gradually fade the patchwork hangings, and of kindness. I have seen the congregation grow grey and bent and disappear over time. I love the pattern on the carpet and the symmetry of the building. I have sat through choir practices and funerals here, vacuumed, and attended youth group. While I acknowledge, and do not condone, the oppression of Christianity on Indigenous people and on women, I choose to exhibit here because I value this community and the love they have shown me.

In 2012 I exhibited my *PASSAGE* works in St Andrews Church [figure 63] and the St Andrews and St Marks community embraced the works and the difficult and painful nature of the kaupapa, upholding my dignity and listening with respect to what I said. Choosing to bring this exhibition *the clarity of light* back to this community was very deliberate. I started this WAI journey because of the positive social responses I received to *PASSAGE.* I wished to end

this long walk through Masters and PhD where I began, to offer back a gift of light, hope and colour to those who have supported me. Sadly despite almost three years of working towards this very specific space for installation, St Andrews Church was closed in April 2017 to await a decision on the viability of earthquake strengthening.

Figure 63: McIntyre, K. (2011-2012). *Passage.* [Painting Installation at St Andrews Church].

My ambition for this exhibition has always been that it is accessible to anyone who wanders into the space it is held in. The outcomes of a Creative Arts PhD have prestige, sitting comfortably in academic libraries and gallery settings, but these are not spaces that are accessible to everyone – the audience they speak to may be limited to only those who hold the appropriate 'cultural capital' (Brown, Lopes, Hir, Hipsky, Stabile, Simieoni, Bourdieu et al, 2000), those who can walk easily in this privileged space. I have learned, over the past few years of working within the WAI collective, that connecting deeply with communities and speaking in humble, understandable ways offers my work a very necessary integrity. I do not want to stand in a different space to those who walk alongside me every week, or to those who believe in what we do. The space that this work will now be shown in respects

the relationship WAI and I have built with the St Andrews and St Marks community. The old St Marks church building is an unassuming, quiet space which has become a place for community activities and groups. It isn't ideal in a spatial sense as the light sources only allow direct sunlight (something which is quite necessary for stained glass), at some times of the day, however it is a space that makes sense conceptually so allowances have been made. Having to adapt to a different space has meant that the installation of this work has been re-thought, but it does clearly reflect the importance of thinking in the WAI way - of flexible and fluid responses to change.

The addition of concept specific music will add to the ambience and sacred feel of this exhibition. During the 2012 *PASSAGE* exhibition an opportunity to present the twelve paintings alongside different Christmas hymns was offered. Taking up this offer meant that I was required to speak about each work publicly and that the hymns attached would respond to each of these narratives. Specific instrumental and sound music also accompanied the works throughout the exhibition period. The relationships I have built with this church community and specific individuals within it have again offered the richness of someone else's talent to my 2017 exhibition kaupapa. The accompanying looped soundtrack has been informed by an in depth discussion of each work with St Andrews Church musician Roy Tankersley. Like stained glass sound is also highly emotive. It will add to the wairua of this space and surround the works, offering another language to the written poems and visual works presented.

The installation of my work reflects the community research approach I have undertaken, and the solidarity this has offered to our art making collective. In this space wardrobes stand as women and as bodies of light, alongside each other – all unique, separate, and different, but together they invoke a powerful collective narrative for justice.

The clarity of light 2018 exhibition

The art outcomes

The following section describes the art outcomes of this research project, made in response to the research findings. These comprise eight wardrobes and a glass chair. Each individual work has a poem attached to it and this poem acts as the title for the work. Several components make up each wardrobe. These include: painted, leaded stained glass panels in the opening or front side of the wardrobe; a photographic glass oval in the back side; a fabric work in the inner wardrobe space; and a glass round or rondel (with the poem printed onto it) which is tucked either into a drawer or onto the floor of each wardrobe. The glass chair is a standalone item which anchors and reflects on the community of wardrobes.

The individual discussions offer insight into the personal and broader social kaupapa behind each of the works, and identify notable elements. They also offer comment on the collaborative fabric works undertaken with nine different women.

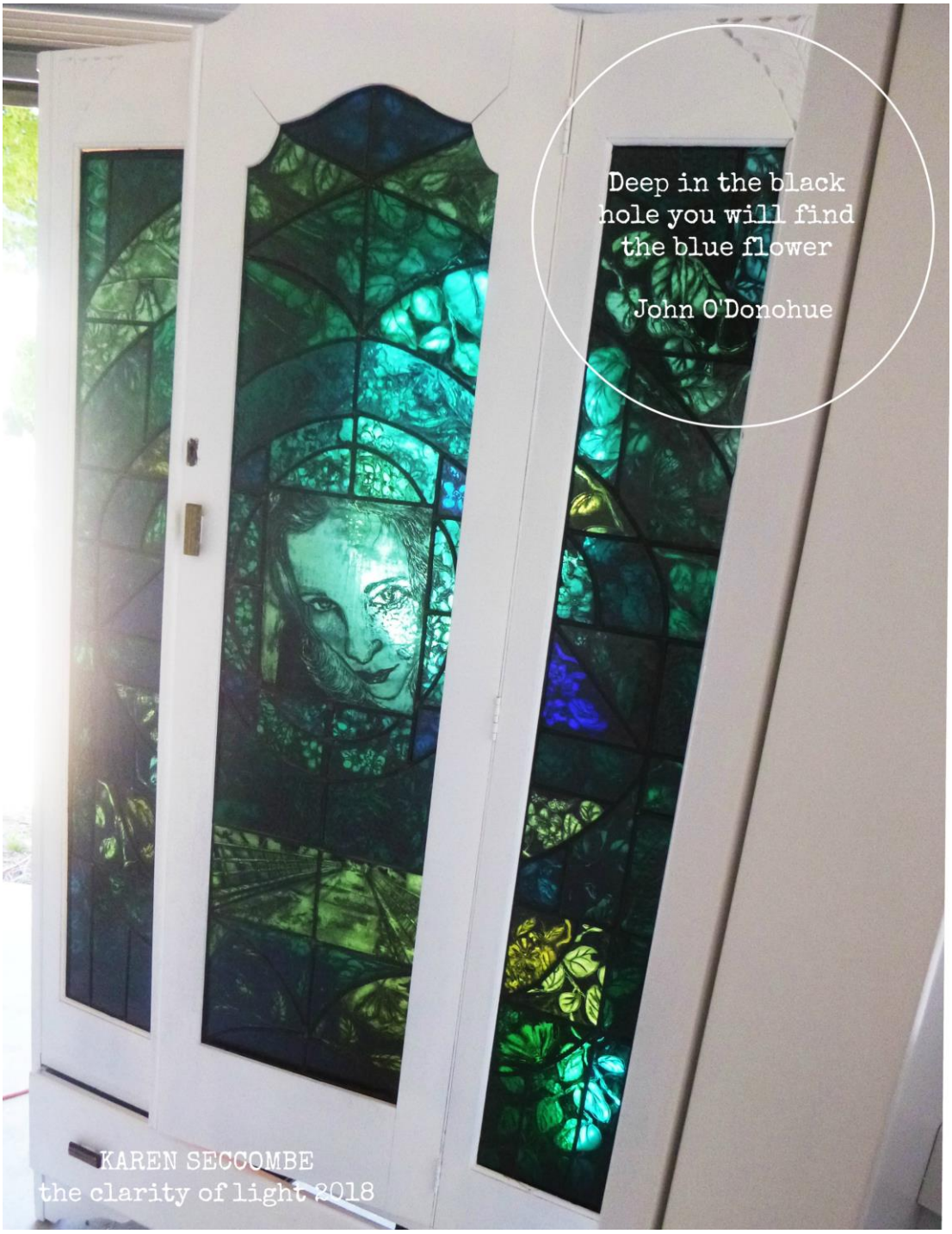


Figure 64: Seccombe, K. (2017). *The Blue Flower.* [Painted, leaded glass installation]., & O'Donohue, J. (2017).*For Loneliness. John O'Donohue poems. Retrieved from:* https://www.poemhunter.com/john-o-donohue/

Blue is said to be ‘the colour of truth’, of infinity, of celestial power, and of thinking. It is a colour associated with calmness, sadness, depth, peace, and darkness. We associate a range of colloquialisms with the colour blue: we describe melancholy as ‘feeling blue’; when things surprise us they have ‘come out of the blue’; and when we are conflicted it is described as being ‘between the devil and the deep blue sea”. A colour that occurs rarely in nature, our most common perception of blue is in our observation of the sky. Dressed in pale blue the colour of a clear sky is not caused by pigmentation but by a selective scattering of light particles. This scarcity was celebrated in great paintings, through the selected use of the ‘queen of all pigments’ lapus lazuli (Ware, 1999). Blue is also the colour of the forget-me-not flower – a plant which earned its name for its habit of freely distributing clinging seeds onto anyone unwary enough to walk too closely past it, ensuring the carrier remembers long after the plant is passed. Both forgetting and remembering form part of the dialogue for this wardrobe.

This wardrobe focuses on the concept of disassociation and its binary, association. The period discussed is 1896 – 1900. In 1896 the age of sexual consent was raised from 12 to 16 years, and in 1900 incest was criminalised (but was required to be reported within a month of occurring).

Figure 65: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

Disassociation is often listed as part of the litany of negative effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on those who have experienced trauma (Jaquier and Sullivan, 2014). Common understandings of this concept are that it involves a disconnection or separation of some aspect of a person’s life from the rest of the

personality. Disassociation is often recorded as a negative side-effect of violence perpetrated upon women and children. It is perceived as a fracture or split in the psyche which interrupts "thoughts, actions, and feelings from intentional consciousness and premeditated control "(Herman, 1997, p.1). Disassociation is commonly negatively viewed as a 'blipping out' or disappearing act, where 'the lights are on but no one is home', and this negative portrayal is explored in the photographic glass oval [figure 65], which depicts a woman's head as clouded and disappeared.

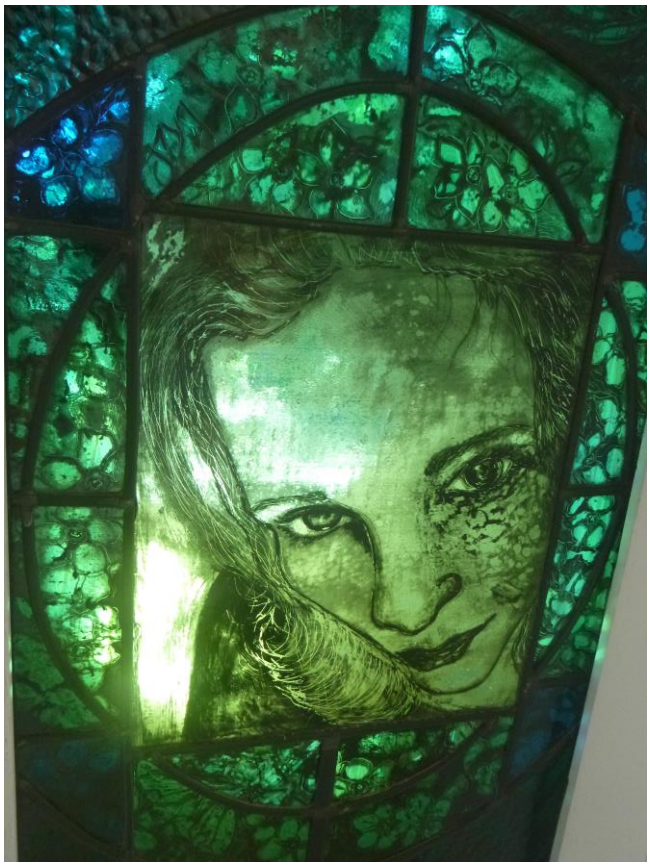


Figure 66: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Viewed with a very different (WAI and Response Based Practice) lens, disassociation may instead be seen as a "positive, perhaps salvific response to instances or experiences of extreme abuse, violence or torture" (Tatman, 1998, p.28) because it can protect us, allow us to create a safe space and resist violence when physical resistance is not possible, and enable survival when there is no other choice. These stained glass panels [figure 64] reflect my positive self-representation of this concept.

They are centred around my face [figure 66], which stares directly at the viewer, challenging perceptions of mindless absence. Below this is a bridge near my home [figure 67] which I cross regularly – speaking to the positive association I now have with this place, but also to the concept of crossing over and spaces between. A naked lightbulb hangs in the panel to the left, acknowledging the many powerful methods women use to focus on anything

except what may be happening to them at the time. Forget me not flowers populate this space, their variations in scale recognise our many ways of observing and remembering.

Figure 67: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

The fabric collaboration in this wardrobe has been undertaken with my ex-husbands cousin, Gayle. The relationship I have with Gayle and her husband John is really special to our family. They are the only family members my children have contact with on their father's side, because we have chosen to maintain an association with each other. They are good people that we love. Making this work with Gayle reflects the relationship that we have developed over the past 30 years – she has always been interested in and has supported my creativity and shared her own.

The white dress sewn [figure 68] has been created from two antique adult women's petticoats, reflecting the adult sexual role which has been enacted upon small girls. It would fit my little granddaughter, but I fiercely hope it never does. She is the reason I fight so hard to see social change. The completed dress was dyed using a dip dyeing method to create an ombre effect of colour graduations from the deepest peacock blue to pale sky blue. Dye pigment particles were also mouth blown onto the wet fabric to create colour variations.

Figure 68: Gayle and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric and thread].

Using dry dye particles on wet fabric allowed the colours within the dye base to separate, giving a subtle range of greens, yellows and almost a black burgundy within the range of blues. Forget me not flowers [figure 69], made by machine sewing onto dissolvable material, emerge from the rents and tears and peep out from cavities in the dress, reminding us that these memories remain and that remembering our oppression can ensure our future safety.

Figure 69: Gayle and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric and thread].

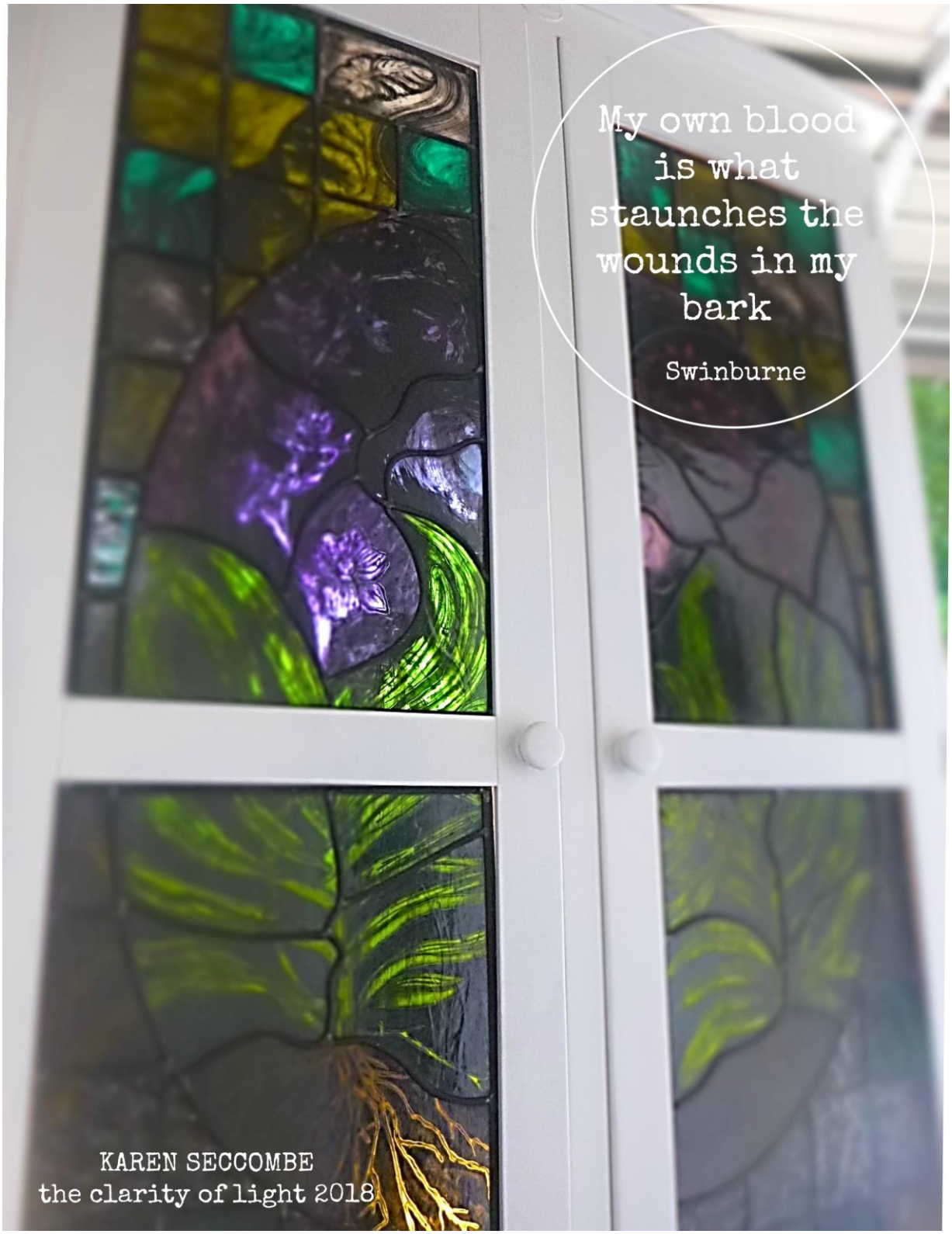


Figure 70: Seccombe, K. (2017). *My Own Blood.* [Painted, leaded glass installation]., & Swinburne, A.C. (1905, p.65). *Selections from Swinburne.* London: Chatto & Windus.

One of the two largest works, this wardrobe [figure 70] discusses the binary of shame and dignity –which is of considerable import within this kaupapa. Linked to the year 1985, in which rape within marriage became criminalised in this country, this is also the heaviest of all of the works presented. Indeed, shame is big and heavy to carry about – it has an impact on everything that we say and do, or don't. This wardrobe offers a portrayal of those things that are often the most shameful and undignifying to us as 'victims'. Overwhelmingly these shameful experiences include sexual violence – a category "In which one is reduced to a mere body to be used by the other" and which is "perhaps the worst, most humiliating kind of violence, a violence that undermines the very basis of my identity…by exposing me to unbearable shame" (Zisek, 2005, p.178).

Shame is often aligned with attributions of blame – we feel ashamed because the inference (or often the outright suggestion) is that we are somehow to blame for bringing this shame upon ourselves. Like the myth of Lucretia, we feel responsible for what has happened to us. We question our actions, our dress, and the choices that we made which led to our shame. Clearly depicted in the glass oval portrait [figure 71], many reasons to blame and shame the 'victim' are evident – an empty alcohol bottle lies next to her, she appears drunk, she is alone, and her clothing could be considered provocative.

Figure 71: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

The binary opposition to shame for me is dignity and pride in who I am. My ancestry and family have allowed me dignity in re-establishing myself. 'My own blood' have always offered me a positive understanding of who I am and this has helped me to see myself in a way that has shifted this shame to where it belongs – with the perpetrator.

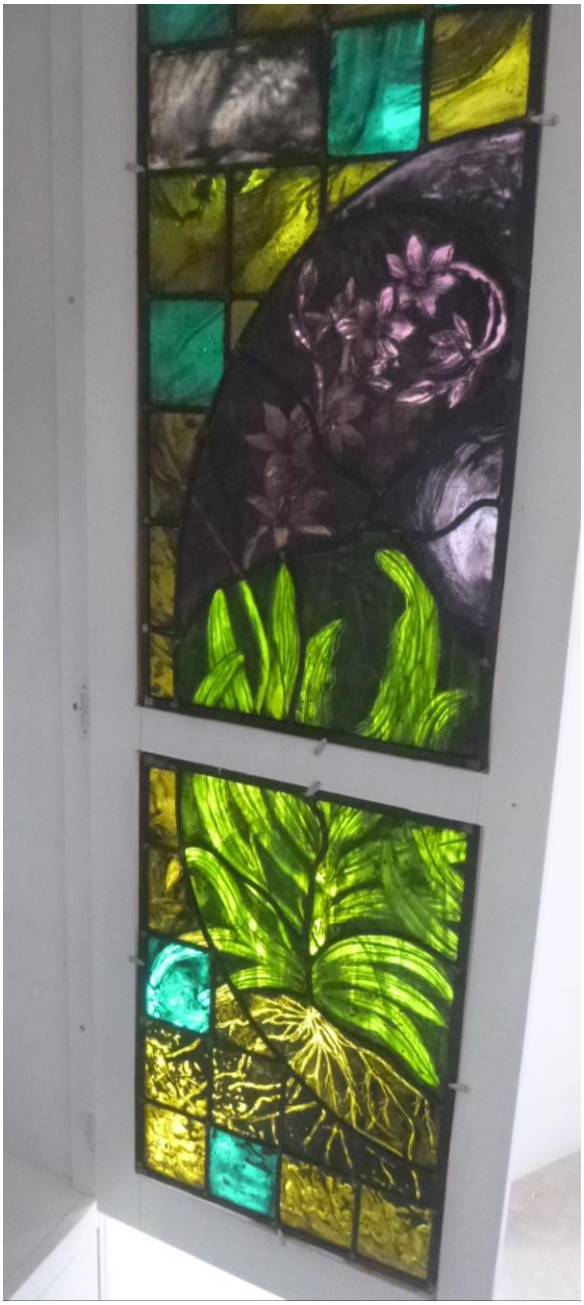


Figure 72: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Imagery within these stained glass panels represents the female reproductive and sexual organs – orchids [figure 72] stand as vulvas and the curve of their stems reflects the ovaries. The oval format itself is feminine and creates a womb-like embrace around these metaphors. Standing outside this space my hand captures a white feather floating past [figure 73]. This symbol provides a direct reference to the discussion around representation, framed around the story of Leda's rape by Zeus as the swan, in Chapter two of this text. The white feather itself offers a binary – in Western culture it was used as a symbol to shame conscientious objectors. Those who chose not to fight in wartime were often presented with this symbol in an effort to shame them because they refused to bow to the social pressure to enlist. It has since become a symbol of resistance – something which may now be seen as a positive stand against violence. The white feather (raukura) in Aotearoa also signifies Parihaka's passive resistance movement. Parihaka is a Māori settlement that was invaded by armed soldiers in 1881. Instead of engaging in battle the people of Parihaka welcomed the intruders with song, dance, and kai (food). They were repaid with rape, arrests, and destruction (Hohoia, O'Brien & Strongman, 2001). In holding this feather I choose to

peacefully object to violence, to reject the blame, indignity and shame I have been offered to understand my experiences, and to acknowledge my resistance. I uphold my own dignity.

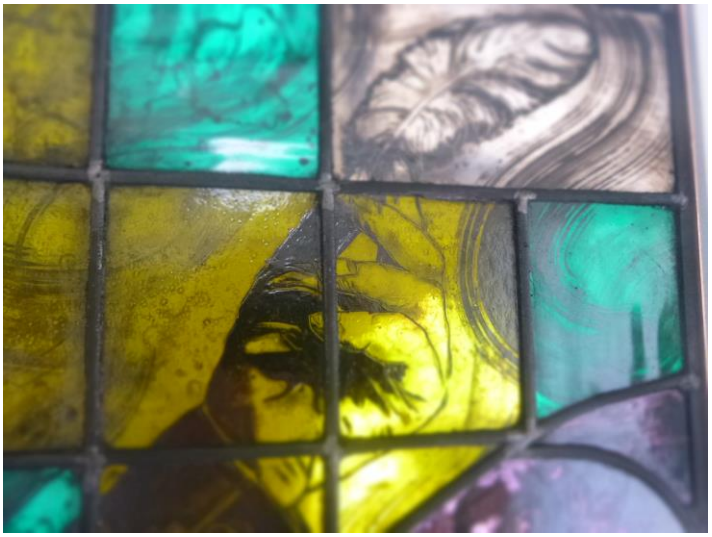


Figure 73: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

The fabric work within this wardrobe [figure 74] was created with Dr. Ang Jury, CEO of Women's Refuge Aotearoa New Zealand, my mentor, friend, and now also my partner in life. We have worked on this piece in the same way we have tussled with academic and social issues together –there has been rigorous discussion and challenge, many questions, 'composting' of ideas, and complete changes of direction have ensued. Our collaboration has been intellectual and conceptual. As Ang is not a sewer I have undertaken the practical side of the work, but the understanding we have created about what this work means to us has been heavily invested with our independent and shared understandings of sexual violence and the concept of shame (it is worth noting here that Ang's 2009 PhD thesis, which I refer to within this text, is entitled "*Shame on Who?").*

Figure 74: Jury, A., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, sack cloth, and thread].

'Torn' delicate silk Pajamas are 'mended' with rough sackcloth using hand sewn 'split' and 'blanket' stitches. Ragged and 'raw' edges remain – the terminology is evocative. Sackcloth and ashes were used in the Old Testament of the Bible to signify debasement, mourning and repentance – attributions which align with the blaming and shaming of 'victims'

of sexual assault and abuse. The sackcloth has many threads drawn from it, subtly uncovering a layer of intricate cloth which lies beneath, if anyone looks.

Figure 75: Jury, A., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, sack cloth, and thread].

Figure 76: Seccombe, K. (2017). *A Thousand Silent Ways.* [Painted, leaded glass installation], & Rumi, M.J., (2017). *Rumi's Poetry.* Retrieved from: http://www.rumi.org.uk/poetry/

We are not so different to the life forms around us. The growth patterns of the oxalis plant can clearly reference our own in times of stress and trauma. Oxalis will wilt and die back at the surface if conditions are not conducive to growth, however the energy that is held in bulbous roots below the surface allows the plant to come back to abundance incredibly quickly once good conditions are restored.

Figure 77: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Oxalis symbolises what has often been seen (by those outside our experiences) as our passivity in response to violence. They see nothing therefore assume there has been no response, but like the oxalis plant our resistance and action may be necessarily underground or incredibly subtle for a time. Oxalis is viewed as an invasive and determined weed – spreading with alacrity and popping up haphazardly in places that we don't expect it. I link this plant to our often hidden activity in the face of violence – to our resistance, our agency, and our autonomy. The repetition of oxalis over these panels demonstrates all we do over and over to hold life, ourselves, and our family together during violence, and despite all odds. My hands are depicted in various positions [figure 77]

amongst threads of memory and connection – reflecting the deliberate and active choices I have made about what to hold onto and what to let go, what to share and what to contain. Bees and honeycomb [figure 78] refer to my ancestors and the lessons and skills that have been passed onto me.

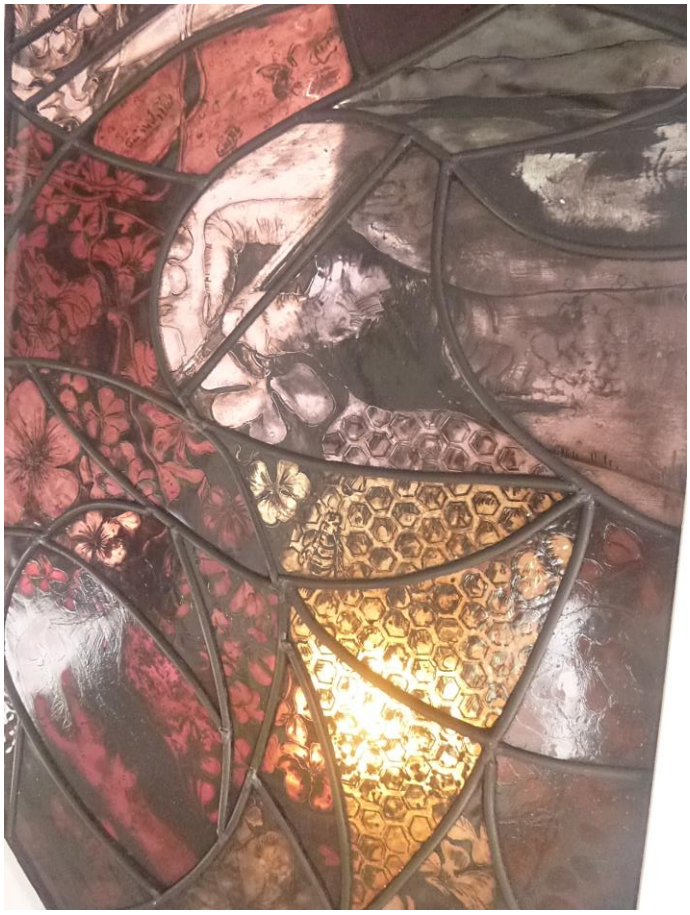


Figure 78: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

In 1893 many women in this country actively sought the right to participate in political decision making by exercising their entitlement to vote for the very first time. The battle to gain this right challenged many entrenched stereotypes and myths around women's subservient, compliant roles within society. As young western girls we were traditionally often taught to 'be nice', 'keep our hands clean', and 'not make a scene'. We were discouraged from activity, and any confrontation of injustice and violence, and instead encouraged into 'the gentle arts' - which we have used to our own ends. Much has changed over time, and many women are active and engaged participants in society today, however the entrenched patriarchy of gender 'difference' continues to be made apparent in ongoing conceptions of women's passivity in response to violence. These deficit understandings are reflected in the oval photographic portrait [figure 79]. A woman with a black eye is sitting compliantly, and uncomfortably, hunched forward with her hands in her lap – apparently doing nothing. Lace lays over her image, disappearing her into a gentle feminine space of control and containment.

Figure 79: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

My dearest friend Kim Anderson and her daughter Greer have collaborated with me on the fabric work for this wardrobe. I have known both of these women for over 16 years – since Greer was a tiny baby. They were my neighbours when I was a solo mum with three children, surviving from day to day. My children loved Kim's babies and her baking. Our two families spent 10 summers heading away camping up north, until my children all left home. Crocheting by torchlight at the campground became part of the way we relaxed at night.

Kim and her kids have been my sanity – she makes me laugh like no one else can, she is the tidiest person I know (and is therefore a fantastic role model), and she has this amazing ability to not care what anyone else thinks of her. She is kind, funny, and caring, and could easily be seen as docile, but she is far from that. I admire her strength, self-conviction and active approach to life immensely.

The women's gloves presented within this space [figure 80] are hand embroidered with leaves and flowers in gentle colours. The word survival crosses the knuckles – like a tattoo. The gloves are delicately tied together with old cotton lace– referencing the idea of restricted activity because our 'hands are tied' (we have no other options), and the fingers are crossed, expressing the often breath-holding hope for peace and survival. It matters to us all in making this fabric work that people understand violence happens to women in all social and cultural groups.

Figure 80: Anderson, G., Anderson, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, and embroidery cotton].

Figure 81: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Pluck their Petals.* [Painted, leaded glass installation], & Peters, A. (2017). *Anna Peters Poetry.* Retrieved from: https://annapeters.carbonmade.com/projects/3456033

Anxiety, fear, hysteria, and paranoia are often listed amongst the effects of violence and abuse on women. What is not normally noted is that there are almost always very real reasons for women to respond in these ways. We are terrified for our safety, our sanity, and our children's wellbeing. We are afraid we will be exposed, blamed, demeaned, and shamed, or will disappoint those who love us. We fear death, injury, failure, poverty, or the removal of our children if we leave (and equally if we stay). Fear incapacitates us, but it can also drive us to create even more safety around ourselves and our children. Functioning amid constant fear and uncertainty is exhausting, insidious and overwhelming. The disabling effect of fear depicted in the oval photographic portrait [figure 82] allows the viewer to deliberately 'look down' on the 'victim' as she cowers on the ground. Subtly, a tiny figure of a man is overlaid onto her prostrate figure, referencing the overwhelming focus on 'fixing' the problem of women's 'irrational' fear, without acknowledging the very real reasons perpetrators give us for it.

Figure 82: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

This tired rather damaged wardrobe [figure 81] is a very special piece of furniture. I bought it for my middle daughter when she was two years old. It lived with us all through the violence and still belongs to her twenty three years later. Part of the financial abuse I experienced was the very limited access to any money of my own. Anything that the children needed I had to provide myself somehow, while my ex-partner ran a multi-million dollar farm, hid vast amounts of cash under the bed and in a family trust, and purchased luxury items as he wanted them. Purchasing this wardrobe, a chest of drawers and a bed for

my small daughter offered me real insight into my capacity to manage financially without him – something that he had assured me I could not do. It gave me a sense of hope, autonomy, and a glimmer of courage, but it took me four more years before I could safely leave him.

Linked to 1871 this wardrobe references a time when women could first attend university in Aotearoa New Zealand. I was seventeen years old when I was deliberately entrapped by the man who would contain my life for thirteen long years. I did not attend university, go flatting, or maintain my high school friendships, instead I became a mother and a wife, an unpaid, isolated laborer on his farm, and a chattel. Leaving this man opened up incredible opportunities for growth and university study was one of these. Fear nearly prevented me from even trying, but when I look back now I am so grateful for my courage and for those around me who believed in me when I could not believe in myself. I don't think that fear has ever gone away, but I have learned to understand it and to do what I believe I must, in spite of it.

Figure 83: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

The strangling nature of fear is referenced by the convolvulus vine and organic lead-lines [figure 83] in this work. Endemic to the area I now live in convolvulus tangles its way through our gardens, scaling trees, constricting growth, and running long white roots invasively underground – so that even when we think it has all been removed it continues to pop up in unexpected places. Seen as a noxious weed, this plant throws up beautiful white flowers and demonstrates an incredible resistance to removal – something that I admire about it. The wax eyes in this work are painted from photos that my mother has taken – she loves to watch them. To me they represent hope, freedom and my three children – who gave me the

courage to leave. The spine signifies bravery, strength, determination and my ancestry. My father's mother was a woman of great courage, leaving an unhappy marriage and rearing 4 children alone. What was her greatest strength was also her greatest weakness – she had arthritis in her spine.

Figure 84: Seccombe, J., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, and mixed media].

The fabric work in this wardrobe [figure 84] is built around my mother's wedding dress, worn in 1967 when she married my father in Masterton. Velvet convolvulus flowers reference the dignity and beauty of this fifty year romance, and offer insight to the privilege that is mine as one of their children. My parents' relationship has always been a little unconventional. I am the first born child of a woman who had three brothers, and a man who had three that gender expectations have been a little different in our family. In the 1970s when I was a child we lived in a small, conservative, rural community. Western gender roles were clearly defined – men 'provided' and ladies 'brought a plate'. This offered a challenge for my strong and energetic mother. On a school committee of mainly men she took it upon herself to undertake any 'men's' tasks she felt she wanted to, including burying a dead

sheep in the school paddock. My parents worked together at one time to trap and skin possums to help pay the mortgage, and my father cooked and parented alongside my mother. When I decided at eleven years old that I wanted to join boy scouts (not girl guides) my parents went to bat to ensure that young women could do this – my father ended up as our local District Commissioner in an effort to create change. My parents' marriage and my upbringing has been the ground that has held me steady and given me courage when violence threatened to tear me loose. I respect what they have built and I honour their legacy of love in this space. However, for me marriage has brought fear, confusion, conformity and control. It has not been positive or nourishing - it crushed me into an idealised, western, gendered role that I had been mostly excused from for all of my life previously. My experience of this union is referenced by the degraded, rust-stained cotton convolvulus flowers twined around a wedding veil [figure 85]. My mother's experience is represented by the white velvet convolvulus flowers around her wedding dress [figure 84].

Figure 85: Seccombe, J., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, and mixed media].

Working on this piece with my mother allowed us a space to share our reflections on marriage, parenting and family, and to acknowledge the differences in our experiences. I have always been very mindful that my experiences of violence may be hurtful for my parents, so I have protected them as much as possible by keeping quiet. Not speaking about these things within this protective and nourishing space has also ensured that our whānau has not been sullied or injured by someone else's way of behaving – a way of behaving that is not part of who we are. My dignity and our whānau's dignity has been upheld in this way.

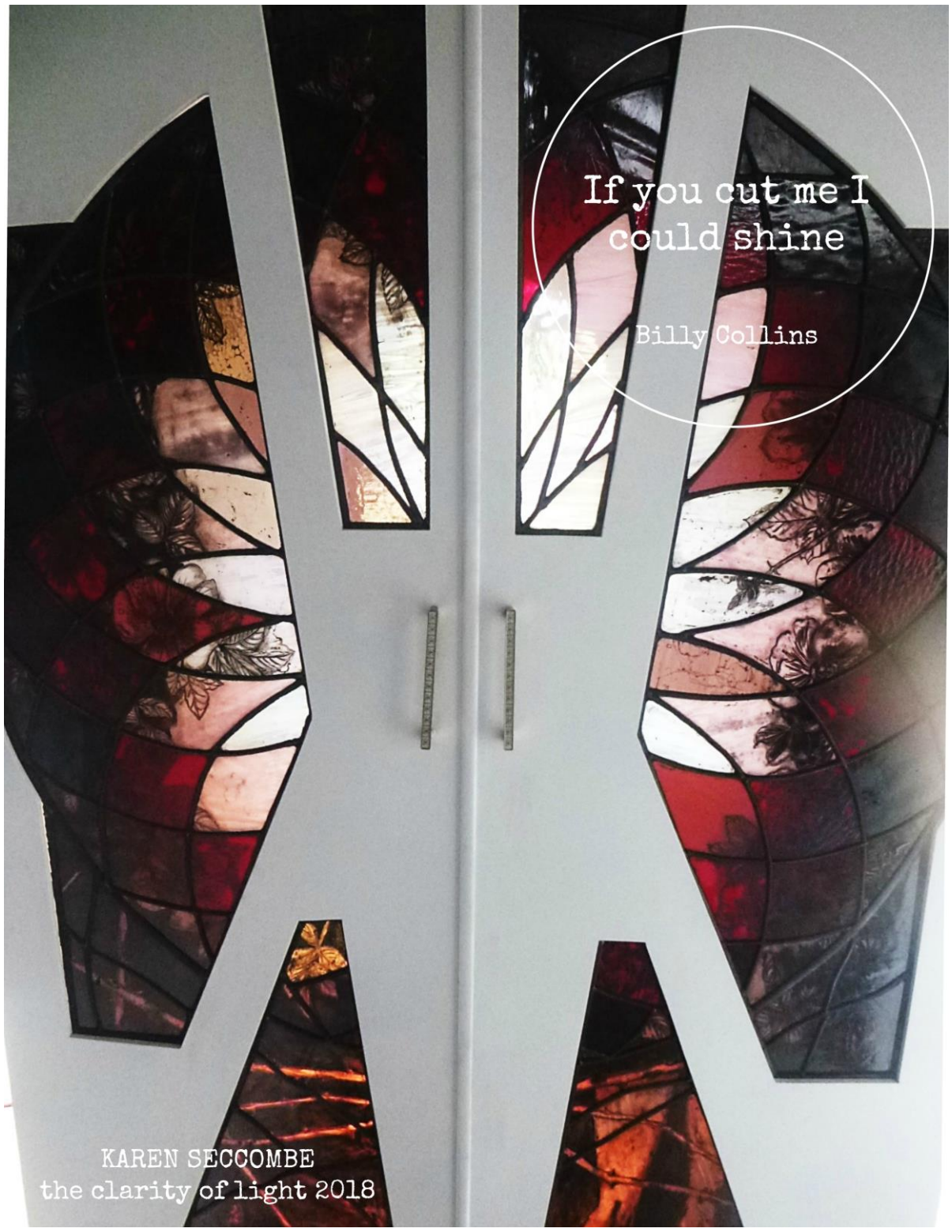


Figure 86: Seccombe, K. (2017). *I Could Shine.* [Painted, leaded glass installation], & Collins, B. (2011, p.63). *Sailing alone around the room: New and selected poems*. New York: Random House.

I am still angry. I am angry because injustice and oppression continue to exist, because women and children continue to be raped, demeaned, and controlled, because society continues to condone, excuse, minimise, legitimate, and marginalise violence and because the man I left almost twenty years ago still attempts to control my responses to his violence, and his children's lives. Anger drives my resistance to this day. I make no apology for my anger. Anger has given me an intense drive to see social change and to be part of making it happen. It does not make me aggressive or confrontational – instead it makes me proactive, engaged and informed – it allows me to shine fiercely for the justice I seek.

Figure 87: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

Being angry is a common, and healthy, response to gender based violence – in fact a survey taken at a rape crisis centre by Becker, Skinner, Abel and Treacy in 1982 demonstrated that 80% of those responding experienced anger. Anger is often viewed negatively within the discourse of violence. When women express anger they may be seen as hysterical, crazy, 'just as bad' as the perpetrator, or to blame for what has happened to them. The oval photographic portrait in this wardrobe [figure 87] depicts these understandings, amongst flames – as anger is often seen as dangerous and uncontrolled. This wardrobe reacts to this concept and to times when women's voices were first represented in Parliament. The first woman in Parliament took her seat in 1933, but the first Māori woman was not sworn in for another sixteen years, in 1949.

This set of leadlight panels creates a Spirograph [figure 88] – referencing the model of practice I have developed from the WAI collective knowledge. Wild roses circle this symbol [figure 89], thorns are evident, and three cicada (whose song increases as the heat rises) sit benignly in corners.

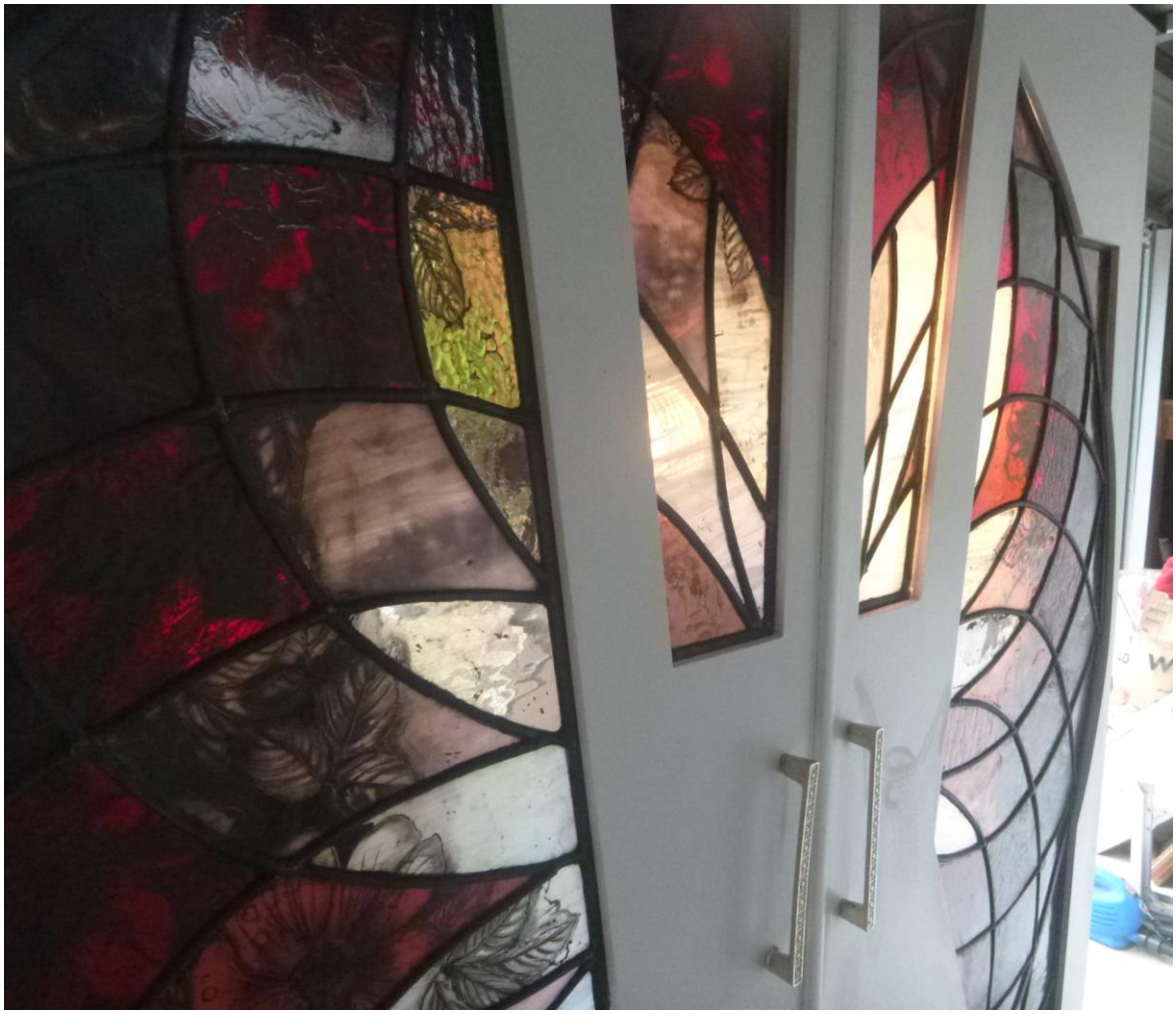


Figure 88: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

The rose has become my personal symbol of resistance. I have always grown roses, as has my mother and her mother before her. For me the rose is a symbol of resistance to the darkness of violence, and thorns represent my ancestry– as Thorne is a family name on my father's side. WAI has been my fight for justice, for dignity, and for change. I am passionately grounded in this kaupapa, and this is

Figure 89: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

represented by my feet [figure 90] standing firmly within the protection of thorny branches (whānau).

Figure 90: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Rongomaiaia Te Whaiti, my friend, colleague, and studio buddy during MMVA, has walked with me through the challenging journey that has been WAI. She has understood and listened, and offered wisdom, sincerity and respect, from a Māori woman's perspective. I have been humbled by the generosity and thoughtfulness that she has brought to my kaupapa and to this collaborative work. Creating a shared kaupapa for this fabric work was difficult and required intense kōrero (discussion) as we approached the idea of anger with very different understandings. One word allowed a connection and a shared understanding to develop – the word whenua (which can mean land, but also the placenta).

In this country the whenua has been injured by colonisation – this is something which connects Māori and Pākehā as people but which continues to create tension. If anger is seen as our 'baggage' then we can carry these tensions and hurts with us – they leave deep impressions upon us. My anger at the violence I experienced is located in a place. The site of my oppression for thirteen years is also the place of my upbringing, therefore it is a place of conflict for me – the resistance I have was grown in the same place that this violence was perpetrated in. The fact that Rongomaiaia and I can labour together to create understanding and to make a work about such a difficult subject, both culturally and personally, reflects our resistance to violence, our relationship, and our anger at injustice.

Green velvet has been used to create a 1940's style women's clutch [figures 91 & 92]. This fabric has conceptual integrity for us, having both grown up with velvet lounge suites (Rongomaiaia's family's couch was in fact this exact shade of green).

Figure 91: Te Whaiti, R., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric, thread, and mixed media].

Figure 92: Te Whaiti, R., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric, thread, and mixed media].

Text is used in this work to create meaning. As noted in the WAI themes discussion - text is an overt form of identification that creates clarity. For Rongomaiaia, text has been used to name ancestors, and is often found in tukutuku panels and tāniko. The outside of this bag [figure 91] speaks to an understanding of whenua and the positive and negative impressions this holds for us, while the inside [figure 92] shelters symbols of resistance with meaning to us both. In bringing forward the word whenua (by impressing a woodcut from behind) on the velvet outer we bring forward those that have passed – those who have inhabited this space before us. A 1948 coin is centred on the front flap, noting Western values of land as a dis-connected, separate commodity.

Figure 93: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Return and Know.* [Painted, leaded glass installation], & O'Donohue, J. (2009). *Benedictus: A book of blessings*. New York: Random House.

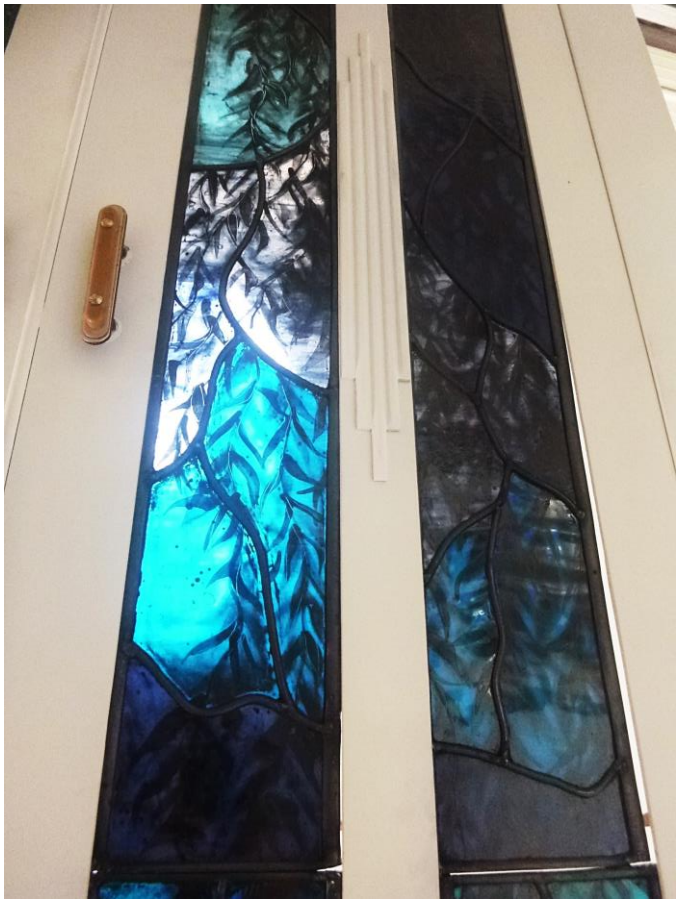
In the early 1960s the birth control pill offered married women an opportunity to regulate their fertility, and effectively control conception, for the first time in this country. Unmarried women were finally offered the same right around 1970, due to high pregnancy rates. The introduction of effective birth control gave women autonomy, allowing them to develop and further their education and careers, while altering perceptions of the sexual act as purely a reproductive activity.

Figure 94: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

Western society has defined women by our roles as mothers, and this has historically hinged on our marital status, our ability to conceive, and on our effective nurturing of our children. Oppressive gendered constructions of women mothering through violence are common, and abusers regularly assault and control their partners by exploiting hegemonic understandings of the 'good mother', with assaults on mothering often occurring even prior to conception and childbirth. Constructed representations of good mothers are further enforced in wider society as women are also blamed and held accountable for the effects men's violence has on their children, and for their 'failure to protect' them from this, obscuring responsibility (Heward-Belle, 2017).

Women's fertility, or lack of, has brought both much sadness and much joy to us. This wardrobe addresses this binary in relation to our status as mothers parenting through violence. Violence makes us sad, and this is well documented - "victims of IPV who were

experiencing verbal aggression and those who reported physical aggression reported significant degrees of sadness" (Houry, Kaslow and Thompson, 2005, p.1474). However, violence makes us much more sad when our children are there, watching, experiencing and living through it alongside us. Is it any wonder then that the recorded effects on us commonly include self-dislike, suicidal thoughts and feelings of worthlessness, with psychiatric treatment seen as 'required' for recovery? (Houry, Kaslow and Thompson, 2005). The photographic oval portrait [figure 94] depicts the smallness we may experience when we express our sadness to others outside our experiences – those who are tasked with 'helping' us to become 'well' (because if we are sad we are seen as depressed and therefore unwell). When we are living through violence, or surviving with our children after we have left (often with men's ongoing use of coercive control through the court or custody systems), we may not have the luxury of time to mourn. The poem linked to this wardrobe [figure 93], by John O'Donohue, speaks of waiting to mourn – which we must often do as mothers. We must wait until it is safe enough to feel sad, and to grieve for all we have lost in surviving violence with our children. We regret the loss of the fairytale we had imagined our lives would be.



The imagery in these leadlight panels [figure 95] contains the moon – a reference to our lunar, moon or menstrual cycles - to lunacy, and sadness, but also to light in the darkness. The crescent moon seen in the fabric work [figure 98] is also a symbol on the Seccombe family crest. The weeping willow tree acknowledges our resistance and tenacity in response to violence - willows can be cut right to the ground

Figure 95: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

but will insistently regrow. The symbol at the bottom of all four panels is that of the Saxon rune Dagaz [figure 96], which can mean day, dawn or an esoteric awakening. It is a rune of bold change and hyperconsciousness (Page and Parsons, 1995), and is included in reference to the Saxon history of my fathers' people in a place called Wolf Valley in Germansweek, Devon, England.

Figure 96: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Figure 97: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

A woman sits looking away from the viewer [figure 97], with long hair plaited down her back. Hair was traditionally used in Western mourning jewelry. My grandmother Eva wore her hair in plaits as a young woman, as did my own two small daughters, and now my granddaughter does too.

Figure 98: Louisa and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, fabric and thread].

The collaborative fabric work within this wardrobe [figure 98] is a moth covered veil laid over our family christening gown. This gown has been worn by several family members, including me. It was sewn by my mother from the train of her wedding gown. My youngest daughter Louisa created the veiled overlay piece with me - we both understand sadness as a healthy response to oppressive social conditions. We share sadness and a sense of loss for what has happened, and continues to happen to us as a family, because of violence. The moths [figure 99] have been free-sewn (using the sewing machine with the foot off) in an intentionally uneven stitch. They are deliberately black to create a strong contrast with the pure white fabric and a connection to ideas of night and day, darkness and light.

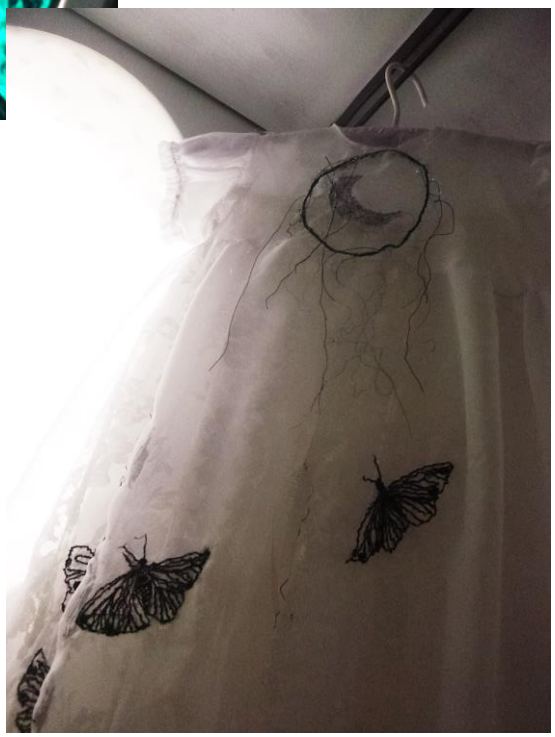


Figure 99: Louisa and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, fabric and thread].

Figure 100: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Eternal Vigilance.* [Painted, leaded glass installation] & Jefferson, T., in Peterson, M. D. (1970). *Thomas Jefferson and the new nation: A biography*. Oxford University Press.

Thomas Jefferson's quote sums up the concept for this wardrobe [figure 100] perfectly – to be free we must remain continually vigilant and we must monitor the many subtle ways that oppression may continue. It is interesting that a quote which is so astute has come from a man who holds such a contentious role in American civil rights history - Jefferson espoused freedom for all yet continued to 'own' people as 'slaves'(Peterson, 1970) , causing me some concern over how this quote may be interpreted within the context of this wardrobe. The sense of conflict, confusion, and compromise this knowledge engenders is actually quite a normal part of responding to violence – as perpetrators often demonstrate behaviours which divide and stall us as their victims. For this reason I have accepted the risk of including the quote. Acknowledging that good things (like our resistance) can come from bad situations and experiences is part of our WAI kaupapa, and part of my personal philosophy.

Figure 101: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

As women who have experienced violence our vigilance is a very necessary attribute when we are surviving in extreme conditions, yet it is regularly prefixed with the word hyper – indicating that we are overly, extremely or unhealthily vigilant, and this representation can be seen in the many watching eyes overlaid in the oval photographic work [figure 101].

This wardrobe is a little different to all of its counterparts – it has a much smaller body, more drawers, and it contains a mirror in which to see ourselves (and what lies around us) [figure 100]. The sense of containment and the layers of organisation and compartmentalisation this wardrobe offers works well with

the way women monitor, control and maintain safety in many complex and careful ways through their ongoing vigilant protection. The two long narrow panels use both imagery and a format that also reference many interlinking, organic parts. Nasturtium plants are intense, invasive and persistent. They seed down almost frantically in an effort to maintain their survival. They are a bone of contention in our garden as I adore their forthright growth, cover, and cheerful faces, while my partner despairs at the way they smother and overtake everything around them - no matter how carefully she ensures their dispatch.

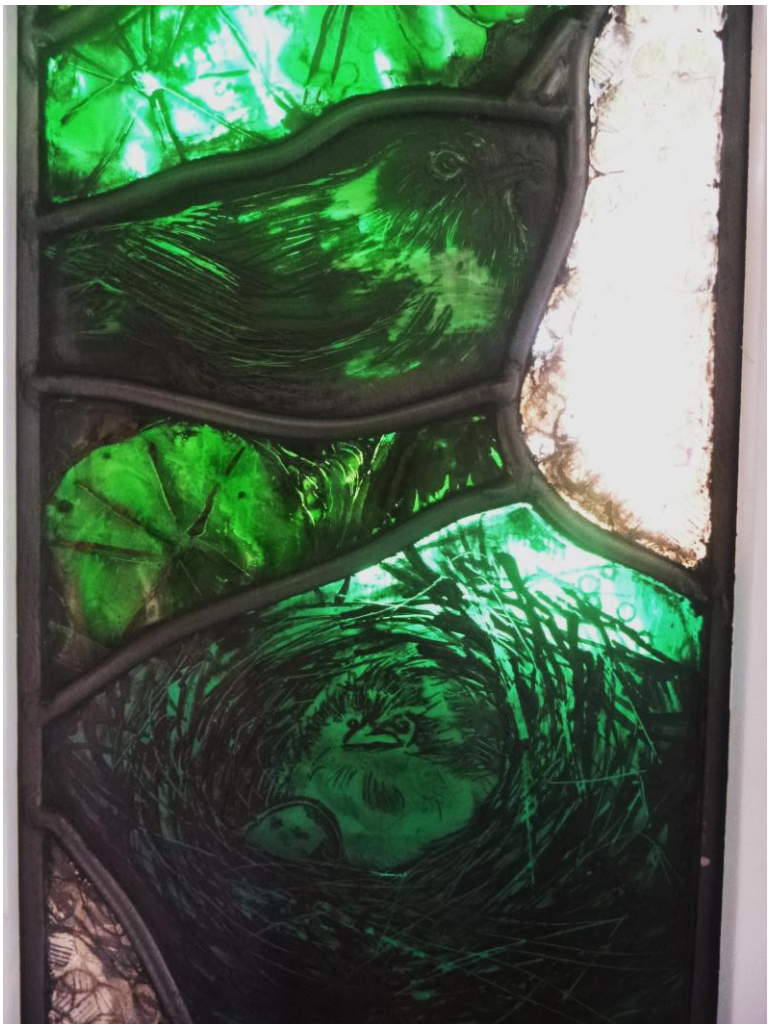


Figure 102: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

Three wax eyes are tucked amongst the leaves – they are my children, with my older daughter pictured above her own nest [figure 102], which she now protects and monitors. The wee bird is my granddaughter and the egg is her new brother, and my tiny grandson, who is due to be born shortly after these works are exhibited. My protection sits around them all still, and always will. I continue to monitor and remain vigilant because I have to. Violence does not have a neat end. We cannot just move on and 'get over' it when we are faced with our ex-partners' ongoing coercive control in many subtle and long-lived ways – ways that impact on the lives of those we love even many years after we leave.

This wardrobe was donated to me by one of the Palmerston North Women's Refuge Advocates. It speaks to the year 1973, when the first Women's Refuge opened in Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand, establishing a legacy of advocacy, safety, and practical support for women who have experienced violence. Founded in 1981, the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR) now has forty member refuges which reach across this country, walking alongside women, providing much needed social commentary and advocating for social change (NCIWR, 2017). NCIWR have supported the WAI kaupapa since 2013, providing information and offering guidance and safe keeping which is grounded in their own dignifying approach.

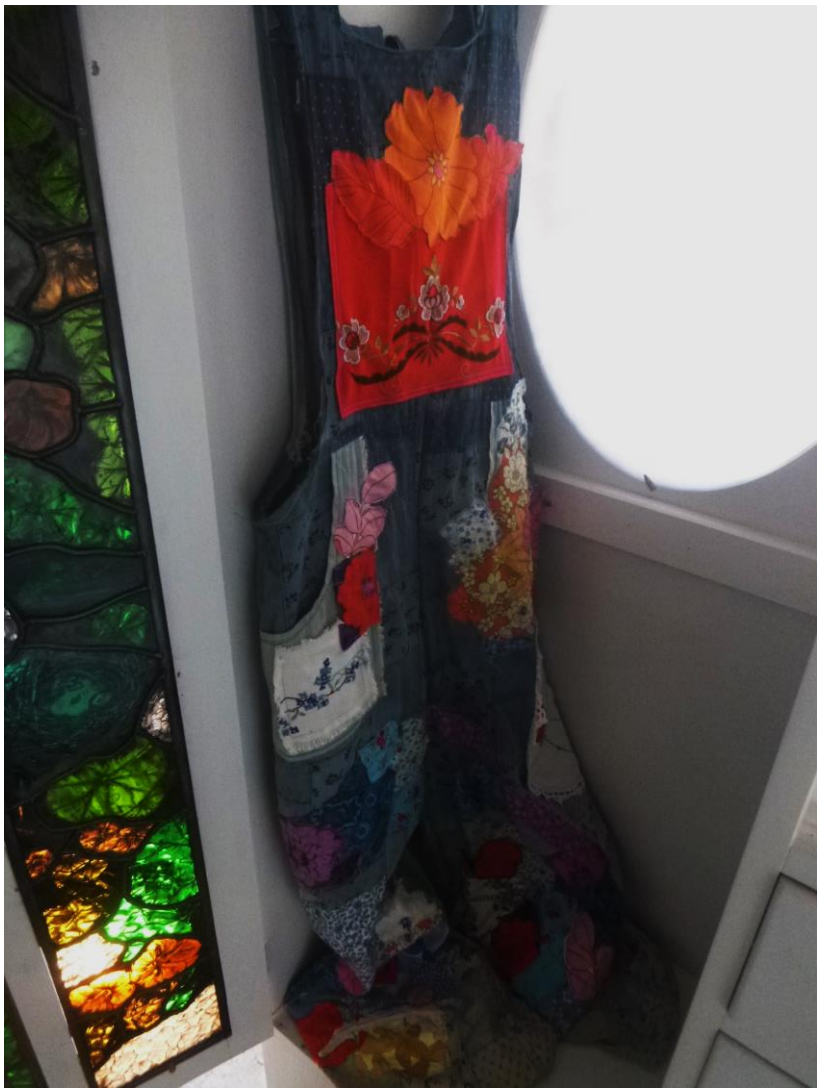


Figure 103: Mahe, C.J., Keli.J., Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric and thread].

The fabric work within this wardrobe [figure 103] was created in collaboration with two of the founding members of WAI –CJ Mahe and Keli.J. Both members have been part of this kaupapa since the very first collective hui. They have offered me wisdom, council, support, and kindness over almost six years, and they have become my respected and valued friends and two of our WAI kaitiaki (guardians or caretakers). The overalls we have collaboratively created from an original 1970s pattern demonstrate the many active and deliberate acts of protection that our vigilance embraces – with layers of recycled

patches hand and machine stitched together to create humble but beautiful collage-like effects [figure 104]. Pockets are sewn onto pockets, referencing the many tools we must have in responding to violence, and the patched underlying fabric varies from faded to new deep blue denim. Like our vigilance it travels across time, and both our weariness and our active, current maintenance are evident.

Figure 104: Mahe, C.J., Keli.J., Seccombe, K. (2017). [Fabric and thread].

At WAI we often make jokes about our hypervigilance and the way we behave because of it, but none of us really finds the necessary nature of this tactic funny. It is beautiful because of what it does – and this debt of care is referenced in the copper and iridescent blue threads used to connect many of the stitched elements.

Figure 105: Seccombe, K. (2017). *Mottled Moth.* [Painted, leaded glass installation], & Lee, L. (1960, p.63). *Laurie Lee: Pocket Poets.* London: Vista Books.

This body of work is set in a specific context, in Aotearoa New Zealand, a land that has been 'colonised'. Referencing 1835 when Māori signed a Declaration of Independence, and the later 1840 signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) this wardrobe [figure 105] speaks to notions of our guilt in response to violence. Guilt around what the ongoing 'process of colonisation' means is a fairly common emotion for many Pākehā in this country. Guilt and self-blame are also emotions that are often identified for women who parent through and beyond domestic violence. These constructions of guilt in response to men's violence are regularly reinforced through gendered discourses which blame mothers for their 'failure to protect' their children while conveniently ignoring the diversity of protective strategies that women do employ (Moulding, Buchanon, and Wendt, 2015). Referencing these understandings, the photographic glass oval [figure 106] depicts a woman hanging out children's washing. In the foreground a 'traditional' Māori mother (with her baby on her back) is portrayed as a 'doll', demonstrating a very 1970s commodification of how Māori culture was represented by those outside of the culture. I grew up around these stereotypical depictions, obliviously unaware of my own privilege and the inherent racism all around me.

Figure 106: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Digital photograph on tempered glass].

The stained glass panels in this wardrobe have two sides. On the left [figure 107] harakeke (flax) and weaving sit alongside a single large Puriri moth – which is native to this country. The right hand side [figure 107] holds roses and thorns, with several small Cinnabar

Figure 107: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

(introduced) moths amongst them. This rose is a symbol of the Houses of Tudor –of British 'assimilation' and destruction undertaken in this country –and the effects of this on of the environment, and Māori, the indigenous people. A broken fence denotes the containment, 'ownership' and control of land undertaken by these colonising forces. The oval centre panel sits between these two differing histories. It is the tenuous, privileged space I have walked within over the past few years, as a Pākehā researcher, and a woman who has experienced violence, within a Māori School of Art, Education and Knowledge at Massey University in Palmerston North. This is a space of injury and sadness, but also of growth and dignity between our two cultures, and between individuals. I stand within it, wearing my pounamu hei-tiki (carved greenstone figure) [figure 109] – which has been with me since before my birth, carved for me by an old man my mother nursed when she was pregnant. Until I was almost forty it was a precious taonga (a treasure) that lived in a special box with my mother's jewellery. It was handled with reverence and care, but never worn. The gift of this tiki at the time it was made (1968) spoke of the kindness and esteem that existed between these two individuals, in spite of the differences in their ages, genders, cultures, and experiences. I wear my tiki now with a deeper respect for this man whose loving actions walk with me, and ask more of me, today, nearly 50 years since he gifted it.

Figure 108: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

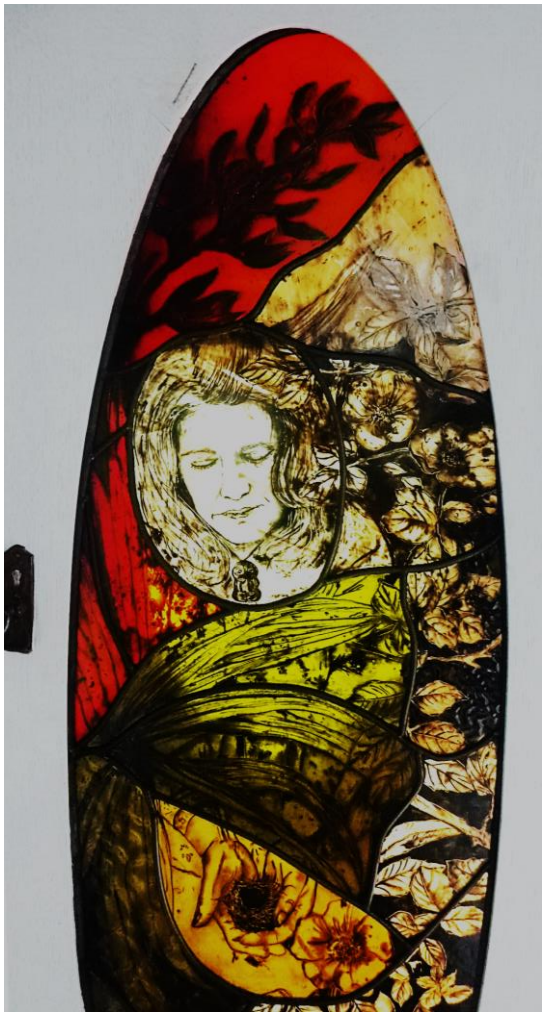


Figure 109: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

In this visual space between I hold sadness for what has been done, and I acknowledge the strength, resistance and protection shown. I honour the positive aspects of both of our cultures and of all genders. A tiki can also represent the goddess of childbirth Hinetaiwaiwa. The empty nest I hold [figure 110] refers to the growth and flight of my children after violence, and the conflict I feel about their upbringing.

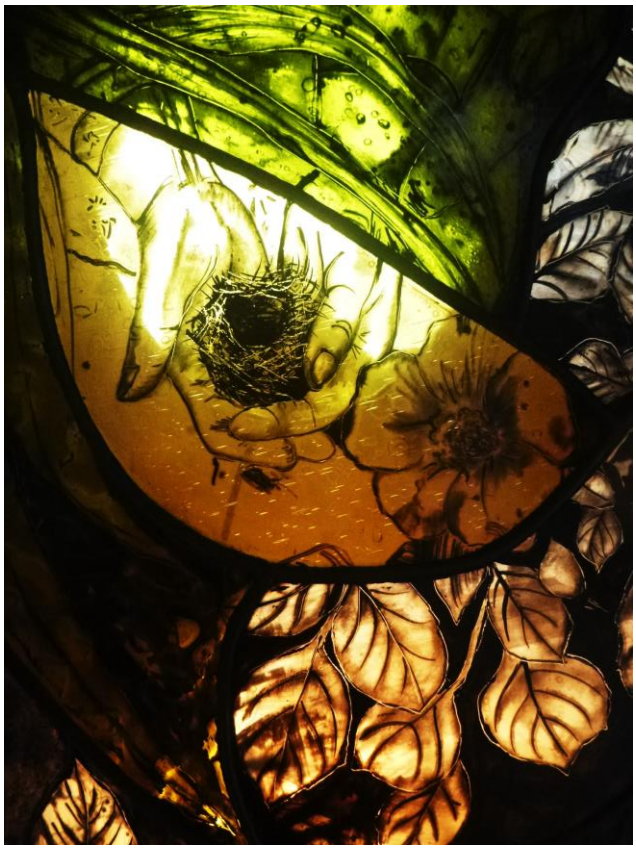


Figure 110: Seccombe, K. (2017). [Painted, leaded glass installation].

These glass panels developed a life of their own. The sunset orange pieces were a soft brown colour during the painting process, prior to firing. When I opened the kiln they had responded to the heat and emerged the colour that is presented. If I speak about the importance of fluid and flexible responses within the WAI kaupapa then I need to walk that talk. I have embraced this colour confrontation within the kaupapa for this wardrobe. It isn't comfortable, or calm, but it is honest. Sunset orange flax evokes memories of pain, conflict, and destruction, and these need to be allowed to sit within this space, alongside growth, life and a moving forward.

They work better than the colour I had chosen, and I am grateful to the kiln gods for their intervention.

Figure 111: Marsh, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, velvet ribbon, Pukeko feathers and thread].

This now largely invisible tension, the different histories sitting between Māori and Pākehā in this country, and a recognition of the role of guilt in response to violence, is referenced within the collaborative clothing work [figure 111] presented with my friend and colleague Karangawai Marsh. In choosing such a difficult kaupapa for this collaborative work I acknowledge the very special approach that Karangawai takes in her role as a kaiako (teacher), and friend. I have been honored by the patience and generosity of her kōrero (conversation), and her fierce support and friendship. She teaches naturally, humbly, and with deep respect for the mana of all people.

A corset has two sides tightly laced together to create a whole, the space between them is therefore constricted and limited. It is a Western construction designed to contain, control and constrict. Traditionally the rigid supports were made of whalebone. Although this corset does not have whalebone inserts it speaks to the entitlement of those who took what they wanted, without regard for the symbiotic connections of the life around us. Working together to acknowledge the difficult relationship between our two cultures offered us a space to understand the guilt we carry as mothers – even when we are not parenting in a

violent situation. When constructions of 'ideal mothering' centre blame upon us for failing to protect, be present, or provide the necessary requirements for our children's wellbeing, we may be "easily invited into criticizing and blaming" ourselves (Moulding, Buchanon, and Wendt, 2015, p. 255), even when we are doing the best we can within a 'normal' family situation.

The velvet ribbon weaving [figure 112], on a worn, stained cotton ground, is in an English pattern called Shepherd's Cloak. This pattern was deliberately chosen to acknowledge the aggressive and active role that the church has historically had in oppressing Māori and women – it references the Biblical Psalm "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (King James Bible, Psalm 23:4). Pukeko feathers curve around one breast [figure 111) reflecting Karangawai's weaving knowledge and experience, and cloaking the deteriorated and damaged fabric 'ground' beneath. Pukeko are used because they one of the few birds in this country whose feathers can legally be utilised in weaving. This work embraces similarities with the construction of a korowai – a traditional Māori cloak. Asymmetry in the bust is deliberately used to disrupt harmonious control, but also to acknowledge women who have lost a breast, and the way mothers often have of favouring one breast when feeding their babies.

Figure 112: Marsh, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). [Found object, velvet ribbon, Pukeko feathers and thread].

"On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble
may the clay dance
to balance you.
And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.
When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the water
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours
may the clarity of light be yours
may the fluency of the ocean be yours
may the protection of the ancestors be yours
and so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life"

(John O'Donohue, 2015, para.1)

Figure 113: Dobbs, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). *The Clarity of Light.* [Cast glass and found Object].

While the addition of the glass chair [figure 113] to this installation may be seen as visually disparate it plays a crucial conceptual role – it defines my 'seat' or position as a researcher, WAI collective facilitator and member, and the artist responding to this kaupapa. The anti-oppressive, social justice, and very exposed approach that I have taken to this research is reflected in the transparency of the glass, and in the physical position this chair takes in reviewing the binaries exhibited within the wardrobes.

This chair is one of the final remnants of the terrifying, exhilarating time that I walked away from thirteen years of violence and the man who had enacted this upon me and my children. When we left it was with almost nothing. I was 'allowed' to take only the furniture that I had paid for myself. For the first few winter months I slept on an airbed and we gratefully accepted any odd pieces of furniture that people could give to us. As humbling as walking into WINZ (Work and Income New Zealand) was, the financial support that I was offered allowed us to survive, and to purchase some necessary household items, including a set of six secondhand chairs for an old table that we were given. The chair created in this work is taken from a direct mould, or uses actual parts, of the final chair I have left from this time – with all of its humble marks and scratches still evident in the glass [figure 114]. All of my children remember this chair – it has become symbolic of our shared family history and our future. It offers both my starting point and my current position in this body of work. Taking this representative piece of furniture and deconstructing then reconstructing it has very much reflected my research journey with WAI. I have taken something which is perceived as ordinary and domestic and have pulled it apart in much the same way as I have

Figure 114: Dobbs, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). *The Clarity of Light.* [Cast glass and found Object].

Figure 115: Dobbs, K., and Seccombe, K. (2017). *The Clarity of Light.* [Cast glass and found Object].

my understandings and knowledge, in order to clarify my position. Many parts have been remade, and the 'seat' has been reconstructed but it has transformed into something softer, more beautiful, and (because it is now considered art) it also becomes political. It is no longer just my seat within this discourse – it is a public statement about who I am and how I choose to represent myself as a mother, an artist, a researcher, a WAI collective member, and a woman who has experienced violence. Light is integral to this constructed space [figure 115].

Installation summary

At the time in which I am presenting this writing (two months before the exhibition is installed) I have many separate visual elements which will make up the whole body of work. I am unable to reflect on the impact these works will have when the stained glass wardrobes are grouped together, and the collaborative fabrics works are tucked within them – but I can guess. I have some idea of how powerful people's responses to the leaded glass panels have been when I have shared images on Facebook. People respond to the colour, imagery, and light as I expected they would – in fact even as their maker and the person who has spent many dirty, tiring and long hours creating these I still respond to these elements myself – with no small sense of awe that I have made them. I love the contrast that these hard glass elements have with the softness of the collaborative fabric works. I anticipate the impact that they may have when they are together, acting as their own bodily collective, bringing

together the many reflections and knowledge that I have gleaned in the past few years of working with the women of WAI.

These works connect strongly to the research findings. I take the WAI way of flipping deficits, using text for clarity, colour for emotional understanding, and plants as symbols of life, growth and activity. I embrace a fluidity of process and an acceptance of the way I work. I question the boundaries around what is considered suitable art work within this academic context – as stained glass has always been linked more closely with craft (not conceptual) work. I bring together many parts and work alongside other women, which not only reflects our WAI model of practice and collective ethos, but also the entire PhD process, which for me has been multi-layered, intricate, intimate, community based, and often just plain hard work. I give as much of myself as I am easy with, allowing readers and viewers to see some of who I am in this work. I am exposed but I am deeply private and the wardrobe format effectively shares this further binary.

While I acknowledge that some works are technically and visually more competent than others, all are necessary within this space because the dialogue they will create together needs to hold weight and reflect the diversity, beauty, scale, and complexity that is my self-representation of the way I understand the social justice work of WAI – the Women's Art Initiative collective.

Chapter 8 Conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research and practice

"Does our research have "soul"?

Did it matter?

Did it leave participants better off? "

(Brown and Strega, 2005, p. 277)

Conclusions

This research has been undertaken within a closed art making community of women who have experienced violence and abuse, offering a crucial voice to many unconventional, invisible, and marginalised sources of information. The aim of this research was to identify and record key elements of the Women's Art Initiative (WAI) kaupapa, approach to artmaking, and art based outcomes which demonstrate the collective's alternate and self-representations, and to respond to these by developing a visual and written model of practice, a written dissertation, and a body of creative work.

The research is grounded in a Response based Practice, feminist, insider, decolonising, and anti-oppressive methodology. A literature and art review, undertaken through this lens, analysed the social and cultural context of violence across time, both in this country, Aotearoa New Zealand, and further afield. This review identified common approaches, understandings, representations, myths, and stereotypes of women who have experienced violence. These findings offer clear connections to many deficit, and legitimated discourses within the world of art, colonial narratives, patriarchy, the media, and psychology, which identify 'survivors' as broken, to blame, passive, angry, fearful, guilty, disassociated, hypervigilant, traumatised, depressed, and in need of help. Also identified in the literature were alternative, more respectful, ways of responding. These include: a Response Based Practice approach which acknowledges resistance and seeks to uphold dignity; an active

engagement in art making as a social justice response to violence; collectivism; and insider directed social activism.

In seeking more dignifying ways to walk alongside victims 'post-crisis' and to privilege our authentic understandings, analysis was made of the WAI collective processes and artworks, and my ongoing personal written reflections in response to these. These reflections describe the everyday reality of working together as an art making, social justice collective and identify pertinent understandings behind the artistic responses we have made as a collective of artists and activists seeking social change.

The research findings offer an alternative to more conventional approaches which 'help victims' of violence through talking and art therapy. They identify and visually represent a model of practice which was developed through robust consultation within this community. The WAI Spirographic model of practice recognises the components which support and uphold the WAI collective's social justice approach, developed over almost 6 years of working together. Key to the visual approach are practices of playing, fluidity, and clarity through the use of text. These artmaking practices ensure flexibility, autonomy, fluidity, and the ability to translate across difference, made possible by the holding of space within the open and shifting format of the Spirographic model of practice.

The WAI Member, Facilitator and Agency Guidebooks [Appendices A, B, and C] encompass the many unique and respectful ways of working which have been developed within the WAI collective throughout the course of this research. These guidebooks are intended to be used as tools - they offer the research as a practical, accessible application. Crucially the WAI model of practice developed through this research offers academic legitimacy and credibility to a way of working that our experience of the WAI collective demonstrates as both creatively generative and effective.

My personal response to these research findings, in the form of a stained glass installation accompanied by collaborative fabric works, offers a challenge to common deficit representations and binary constructions of women who have experienced violence. The form of the collaborative fabric works and the gathering of wardrobes acknowledge lived experience and the importance and diversity of community. The stained, leaded glass works demonstrate the many complex facets and hidden subtleties that exist in spaces between and amongst the common binary representations used to explain, 'help', and understand women when they have experienced violence. The research position taken is clearly identified through the presentation of the cast glass chair.

What has become apparent from this research is that women's responses to violence must be acknowledged - not pathologised, closed down, moved past, or got over. Women are not static and our responses and understandings don't develop in logical stages to a logical end point of safety and wellbeing. We can move in and between many ways of 'being' in response to our experiences of violence. It must be recognised also that some mourning is irreconcilable and requires ongoing, critical, and creative responses to loss (Petersen Adams, 2015). Through WAI we have an opportunity to voice our perspectives and knowledge, and we can do this in a way that is publicly validated, and offers education, advocacy and an open space for dialogue around this often silent topic. Having a safe space, and a community to walk with us offers necessary positive social responses from others who truly 'get it'. Through our art making we challenge the overwhelmingly common, deficit, and professional focus on the effects violence has on our wellbeing and we attempt to alter these responses. Our artworks acknowledge the many active, courageous, protective, creative, subtle, and thoughtful ways that women do resist violence, allowing us dignity and autonomy. This research has demonstrated the many ways that activist art within a non-therapy based insider community offers social change and connection, empowering and upholding the dignity of those who choose to participate. What is crucial within this legitimated research context is that women who have experienced violence hold the most authentic, accurate (Jury, 2009) and useful knowledge – if only our voices are heard.

While the practicalities of running a collective like WAI are not part of this research focus, it must be noted that this type of insider-run, 'post-crisis', activist network is very necessary. It is an area that is not often recognised within the broader crisis and therapy-led industry who respond to us. Women's Refuges across this country actively and deliberately utilise many positive, and empowering ways of working with 'victims' during the period described as 'the crisis', offering advocacy and dignity to the women they walk alongside. These positive responses are crucial for those of us who are clients within their services. However when women leave, or if they do not seek assistance from Women's Refuge, there is no formal 'post-crisis' support system available. It is recommended that ongoing funding be directed into this area.

While the effects of participation in the WAI collective on women's health, stability and wellbeing have not been part of this study, it must be noted that most members have grown in confidence, knowledge, and ability as both artists and activists. We have developed friendships and used our art making to speak about some very difficult concepts. Having our voices legitimated through our art making processes and yearly exhibitions has offered our narratives dignity. The positive social responses we have received have allowed us to see ourselves in many ways that do not reflect the often deficit mainstream responses we receive outside of this space. While this research did not analyse how effectively the model of practice translates across difference in region, facilitator, and members, I have firsthand experience that it does. I spent some time with the newly established WAI Blenheim collective and felt immediately at home with them. The WAI ethos is well established here – the important things are being respected and cared for and it shows in the relationships being built, the wairua of the space, and the art being made.

Through the medium of art a very different way of thinking about, representing, and responding to women who have experienced violence has been constructed. The WAI collective approach to art making within an insider community offers a powerful, authentic, self-directed alternative to more commonly applied art therapy approaches. It challenges many deeply entrenched deficit and pathologising stereotypes and myths, which are used to

represent women who are considered too broken or unsafe to speak for themselves. Drawing together many threads, and opening many spaces between these, the WAI Spirographic model of practice developed through this research project clearly reveals the fierce, proactive and unique responses women can construct when they are respected, heard, and offered autonomy within a collective art making setting. This research shares a way of thinking that is anchored in years of practice, many conversations, and a rich diversity of membership.

Sharing such precious and privileged knowledge within the space of a research environment may hold dangerous potential for misunderstanding and further exposure of those who have already suffered the overwhelmingly negative responses that others often make to them. It is, however, the best chance that we have, as those who know violence intimately, to create change, and to have our perspectives and knowledge recognised and legitimated. We want greater recognition of what violence is really like. We want to see the perpetrators of this violence held accountable. We want different responses - better responses. We want other women like us to have their dignity upheld, which will happen if they are recognised for the resistance, protection and vigilance they have constantly demonstrated in the face of horrendous and dehumanising violence. We want to be respected as artists and activists.

This knowledge is unconventional. It has been marginalised and is often invisible within the broader discourses of both art and violence, but it matters. As an individual artist, the WAI way of working has offered me myself, but a different self. The way I understand my experiences and self-represent these is real. It isn't perfect, but I don't need perfect – even in this setting where the expectations are of high academic and artistic accomplishment. I have a community of WAI sisters standing around me and my work, and this solidarity allows me to make art that is an honest, genuine reflection of my knowledge. It does not hide the darkness – but embraces it alongside the light. The sharpness of clarity comes from this contrast.

Epilogue

We are there – in the space where endings come –
and yet I ask you instead to continue on

Continue
acknowledging resistance
not just resilience,
seeing strength and dignity
where none is noticed,
asking what did you do or how did you respond
instead of how do you feel?

Continue
challenging oppressive, colonising, and patriarchal behaviour
And believing in our own autonomy,
again and again
and again

And remember always
that our light may be different
but it is present

Our grief is dismissed
but it is deep, deep grief
we mourn too – for what is lost,
for what was taken

We are not broken, or mended,
We are not victims or survivors
We are not sharing our trauma
Or hiding our trauma

We are not stuck in the past
Or moving on

We are not one part of our life

We are not a binary
We are the space between

We are whole people

We just
are
us

Yes we are complex – all of us are
So let us speak for ourselves

All we ask is understanding
Kindness
Respect
Acknowledgement of our truth
Our difference, and our sameness,
That you listen to us, really listen,
And please - uphold our dignity.

We don't want your pity

Hold us in a deep part of you – the part that connects and responds to others
Remember us – we are everyone and everywhere around you
See our light
Be gentle

We offer you this cloak of knowledge
Hard won but ours to give
And we thank you
for walking with us
for listening
for caring

You carry our hope for change

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Appendices

Appendix A WAI the Women's Art Initiative – a members guide to our collective

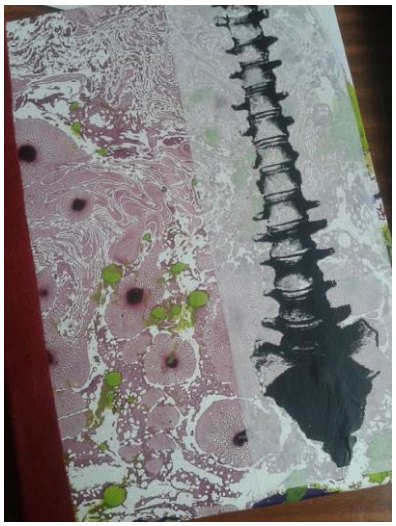
Appendix B WAI the Women's Art Initiative – a guide for participating agencies

Appendix C WAI the Women's Art Initiative – a guide for facilitators

Appendix A





WAI – THE WOMEN'S ART INITIATIVE

ART MAKING AS RESISTANCE AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE - A MEMBERS' GUIDE TO OUR COLLECTIVE

Karen Seccombe | WAI facilitator | September 20, 2017

Contents

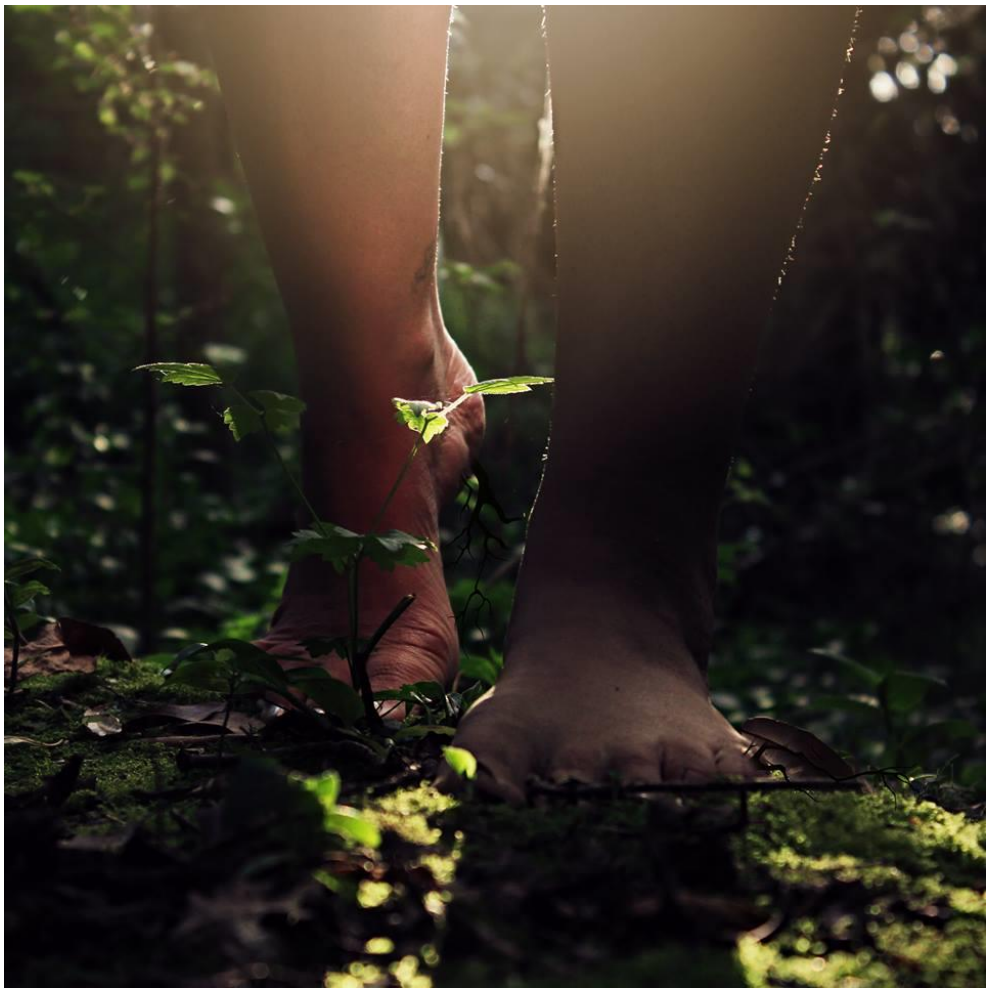
Welcome to WAI

Tena koe and welcome to WAI – the Women's Art Initiative collective.

WAI is an art making collective, a place to make art not a place to do art (or any other kind of) therapy, which means you don't need to 'talk' about anything unless you want to, however, we do often discuss our experiences informally as we go about our making.

Thank you for having the courage to consider joining us. We all know how hard it can be to acknowledge the violence and abuse that we have experienced because we have all been there. This means that you can make art alongside us and know that you are not being judged or pitied for what you have experienced and how you have responded.

This members' guide is for you to read, scribble in, think about and question. It should cover all you need to know (but if it doesn't then please let me know and I will update it as required!).



WAI CARETAKER AND PN FACILITATOR

Karen Seccombe

(MMVA, BFA, BEd)

WAI started as a direct response to the 13 years of violence that I experienced, and to my ongoing discomfort around how women are seen and represented because of these experiences.

Art-making has been a crucial way for me to self-represent my identity and experiences in my own way. It has offered me a voice, and a way of speaking that has upheld my dignity and opened a space for others to acknowledge their own experiences.

WAI was developed as part of my Master of Maori Visual Arts degree, through Te Putahi-a-Toi, Massey University. It continues as part of my PhD research, supervised by artist and Massey Professor Bob Jahnke, and Dr. Margaret Forster, and will carry on as an art making collective after this research is complete in early 2018.

The WAI collective approach to art-making, challenges conventions which silence women, and opens dialogue around violence and abuse. It offers us a safe and accepting place to be together, to make art, and to effect social change. No one else gets it like someone else who knows it, and we all do.

Thank you for having the courage to pick this guide up. Please have a read about our philosophical approach (kaupapa) and some of the practical elements involved in being part of the WAI collective. I hope that you will join the women of WAI and enjoy the positive energy that comes from art-making within this collective.

In the spirit of WAI

Karen Seccombe

Phone 0273422448 or email studio_kimbolton@outlook.com

Understanding violence – a very brief overview

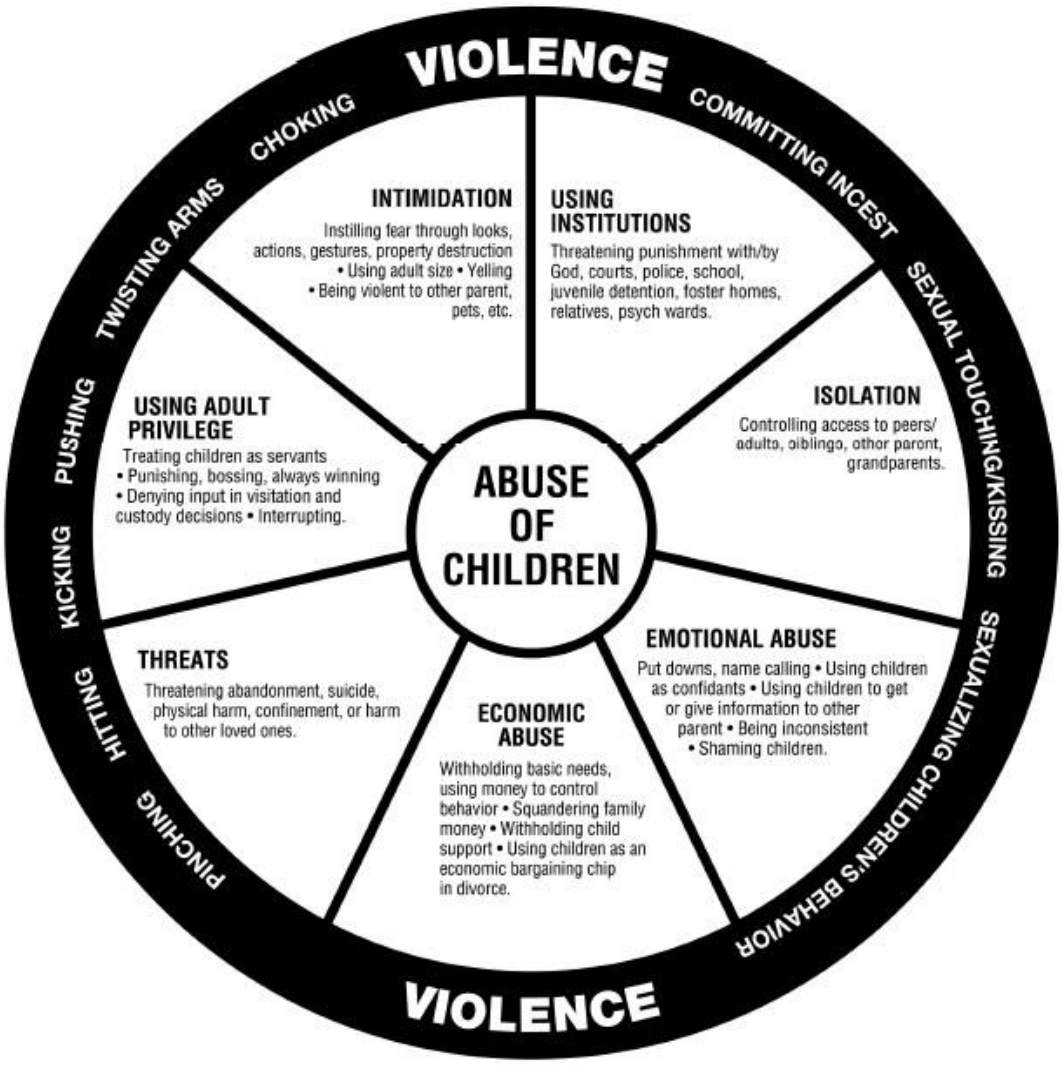
What is violence?

- Violence is about power and control
- It is deliberate and controlled (abusers choose when and how to use it)
- Violence is so much more than just 'battering' or physical injury

Violence comes in many forms. Below are two wheels which show some of the types of violence you or others in the collective may have experienced.

Duluth Power and Control wheel

Duluth Abuse of Children wheel



If you would like more information on the tactics used or would like to discuss this further please talk to your facilitator or advocate.

The myths about violence

Myths are made up stories that we commonly use to help us understand something or someone outside of our own experience or culture. Myths are dangerous if they misrepresent, or legitimate oppressive ways of seeing and responding to people.

There are many myths around violence. Here are a few of those commonly used:

It doesn't happen to the people I know or to people like me

Violence happens to people across different cultures, societies, ages, and social groups. It isn't just the problem of indigenous, uneducated, or poor people. Both abusers and those being abused are skilled at hiding violence.

She could just leave

Simple response – he could just stop.

Women don't leave violent men for many reasons, some of these involve protection - because it may be just too dangerous to leave. Abusers will threaten women, children, wider family members or pets in order to maintain control. Leaving is often the most dangerous time for women.

Many women experience financial abuse, are isolated, and do not have the means or support to leave.

It's a 'relationship' issue

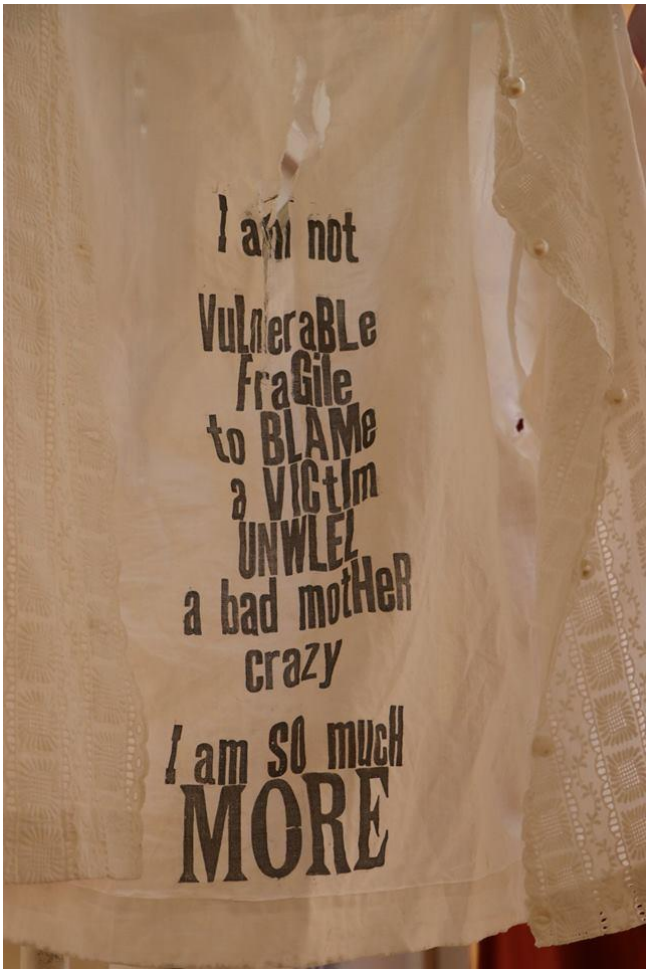
You are not in a 'violent relationship' - this common saying makes the violence mutual, but the statistics indicate that violence is overwhelmingly unilateral (one way) and it is gender based - one person is the abuser (86% of the time this is a man) and the other person is being abused (again overwhelmingly this is a woman). It is more accurate to say that you are / were 'in a relationship with a violent partner'. How we talk about violence matters to how we are seen, and to challenging the myths and stereotypes around who we are as 'victims', for example: if you were raped as a child this was not 'sex' or 'being interfered with'- it was child rape. Children don't have sex, because sex is a mutual act that requires two consenting adults.

He didn't mean to do it – he lost control, was drunk, had a tough upbringing and was abused himself, or it was out of character for him

Violence is a choice. Men choose to use violence, they choose when and how they use it and they choose when not to use it. Alcohol, anger, not knowing a different way to respond, and other reasons for using violence are excuses. Many people drink, or get angry and do not use violence. Abusers can be drunk or angry and choose not to use violence if they know there will be a negative response to this (eg: if family members are there who will step in). If we excuse violence we make it ok for abusers to continue to use it, because we take the responsibility for using it away from them.

She is to blame too – she was drunk, angry, didn't leave, or didn't behave appropriately

There is no excuse for violence. Victims are not to blame – ever.



If she wasn't so broken she wouldn't have made such bad choices

Women do not go willingly into relationships with men that they believe will be violent.

Overwhelmingly the person we meet and start seeing appears charming and caring, and treats us well. We hold out hope that we will be loved and treated kindly. We want to believe the best of people, no matter what our history has shown us. Abusers are persuasive and clever enough to know when to behave well. The bad behaviour comes when the potential victim is in a place where the abuser can isolate and control them, disarm them, and confuse them.

Many psychological tactics are used to ensure victims are confused and shamed. If victims were actually so broken then they would not hold out hope for love, or cling so fiercely to their dignity and autonomy. It is also important to look at the social conditions surrounding these decisions.

She is just as bad as him

Sometimes women are seen as 'just as angry and violent'. When we are abused we often get angry – this is a heathy response to being badly treated. Anger is a form of resistance to power and control – how we use this anger matters. Sometimes women will use violence to provoke men's violence at a time, or in a place, that is better for them. Women may use violence to protect others, to try and access help, or to manage life around the abuser's violence and control.

It's not violence because he doesn't hit her

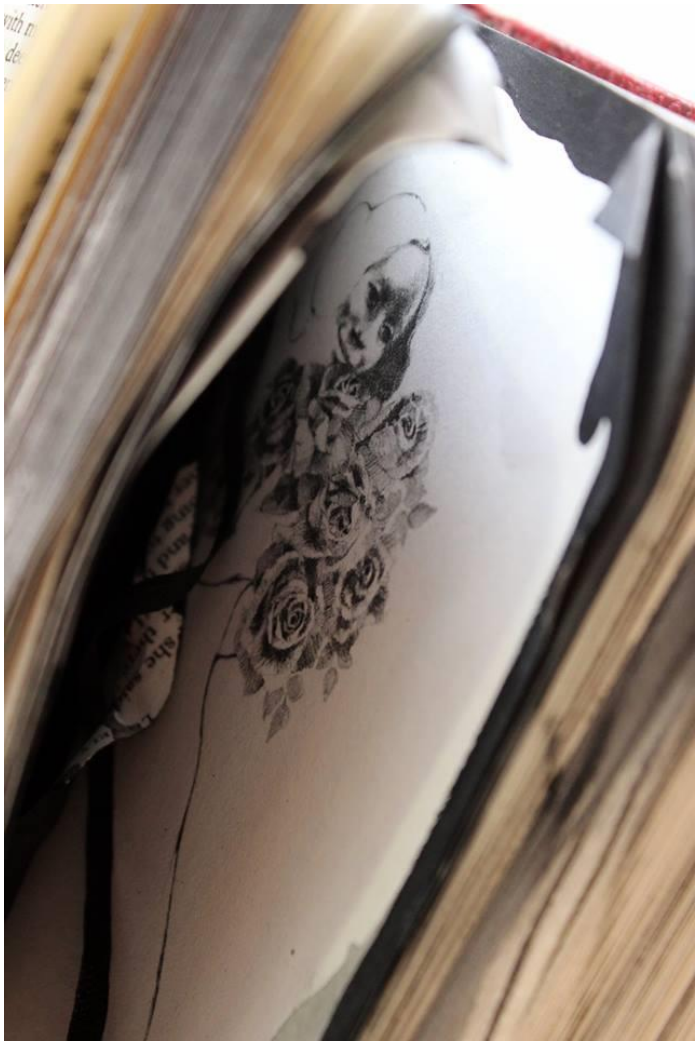
Violence is about power and control. At least when the violence is physical it may be evident to others that we are being hurt. If the violence is mostly sexual, psychological, and financial then it is often missed, is difficult to explain to others, or to access help for. We may think we are going crazy (because we are usually told we are), are having mental health problems, and are depressed, anxious, or to blame when actually what we are is oppressed. Violence hurts, no matter what form it takes.

She's done nothing to stop it

'Victims' always resist violence. Just because it isn't seen or it didn't stop the violence happening doesn't mean it isn't present. Sometimes it is just too dangerous to overtly resist violence, so women and children will resist in small, nuanced ways. Compliance with violence is not consent for abuse to occur. Sometimes compliance keeps us safe. At such times resistance may take place only within the mind. Resistance matters because it upholds our dignity in the face of unimaginable indignity. Abusers know that women resist and take active steps to prevent this.

How many women experience violence?

In Aotearoa New Zealand one in three women will experience intimate partner violence at some stage in her lifetime, and almost 30% of women will experience sexual violence. You are not alone – most of us just don't bring it up in conversation – it is incredibly difficult to speak about many of our experiences. When we do speak about them it makes people uncomfortable, and we are often given very negative responses.



How are abused women commonly seen?

Women who have experienced violence are often portrayed as broken, to blame, vulnerable, sad, angry, crazy, dangerous, diminished, poor mothers, helpless, and unstable – and these are just a few examples. These understandings come from a deficit or negative approach. WAI challenges these understandings from a Response Based Practice approach.

Why (WAI) art making?

What happens to us once we are over the crisis and out there on our own away from the violence?

Walking away from the advocacy, the safe house, the education programme, and many of those who have supported us through the 'crisis' is generally positive – it may mean we are heading into a safer space. Society expects us then to get on with our lives as 'survivors', and put this traumatic time behind us. But we walk back into a world where our experiences of violence marginalise us and make us different. We sit uncomfortably within a society which ignores, minimises, and excuses what has happened to us. Our private realities will not match the public perception of us as "vulnerable victims" or "brave survivors" of violence. Our resistance to this violence will be hidden, minimised, unacknowledged, and ignored. We will rarely have the chance to represent our own stories because experts and spokespeople will speak for, to, and about us. We will be seen as too ashamed or damaged to speak for ourselves. This is our reality, and it doesn't change no matter how long ago this happened to us.

How do we challenge these stereotypes and assert ourselves as whole people when our identities have so often been defined by the media, police, medical practitioners, psychologists, social service agencies, our ex-partners, our families, and those outside our lived experiences?

Sharing these narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. Research backs this: Jones (in Hogan, 2012) discusses the difficulty of women sharing their narratives of abuse with friends and family or wider society and acknowledges the unbearable weight of pain and disgust these narratives may cause others. The difficulty of voicing experiences of violence is also acknowledged by Jury (2009) and Walton (2010).

The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence. The language which sits around this violence holds such an emotionally meaningless weight that it fails miserably in capturing our lived realities. For example: the word "rape" can never portray the reality of being raped.

How can women speak of these unspeakable acts of violence in a way that is socially acceptable? If we cannot share these core experiences with 'outsiders' then how can we feel connected and empowered, or even understand what has happened to us? Our avenue becomes silence. If you don't talk then you are not judged.

Art making (as opposed to art therapy) offers an opportunity to self-represent these experiences without the need for words. Art making about our experiences allows us the autonomy of speaking for ourselves, showing our experiences from our perspective, in a way that does not further disempower or pathologise us.

Art making as a collective, where we can remain anonymous if we choose to, holds even more power. The solidarity experienced in making art together is viewed by Levine and Levine (2011) as essential to the restoration of kinship and the sense of being part of a living community; "the arts are also capable of holding the experience of mourning what an individual or group has lost. Mourning and celebration are two essential ways in which art-making can touch the essence of being human. Both our tears and our laughter can hold us together" (p.29). If this solidarity is with others who know violence then there is no careful tip-toeing around – we can speak openly and understand readily.

The potential for social change inherent in the power of image making offers not only a mediation between individuals and collectives but also between "cultural, universal, transpersonal and personal meanings" (Jones, 2012, p.48) - it may demand responses to injustice. In this way art becomes not only a voice for us, but a social action – a way of creating change, challenging the stereotypes and myths that sit around who we are and what the lived reality of this violence was like. It is an opportunity rarely afforded us.

WAI is that opportunity.

The WAI way of working – our kaupapa

Our WAI kaupapa recognises the history of oppression, colonisation, and patriarchal power in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and acknowledges the ongoing, shifting nature of these discourses. We challenge misinformation and misrepresentation, and the authority of others over our realities.

WAI focuses on creating an environment where women are safe and have autonomy. We are safe to share our experiences through art making, safe to talk - or not talk, to make art or just drink coffee - safe because everyone in this environment has experienced violence.

Making art together places the focus on our creativity - not our vulnerability, our brokenness, or our resilience. WAI upholds our dignity through the ongoing acknowledgement of our resistance to this violence (a Response Based Practice approach), an active engagement in art making, and an ethic of care or manaakitanga.

Our art work is about us – our experiences, our responses to these (and other people's responses to us), our identities, relationships, and our desire to see social change. To date the artworks produced by WAI overwhelmingly demonstrate our dignity, our resistance, and our empowerment. They also share the sadness and darkness of this violence, but in a way that has surprised and moved viewers, because of its colour and positivity. WAI like to take the negatives and flip them on their heads – whose shame is it anyway? Not ours.

WAI is insider facilitated – it is not an art 'class' with a 'teacher', as this would create a power dynamic that would preclude collectivism. The WAI facilitator is also part of the collective and will make art (or not) as she wants or is able to. Learning about art happens – and everyone in the space can share their art making knowledge if they would like to. Specialised tutors can come in but you will be able to opt out of these sessions if you don't feel comfortable about being

there. The art making is flexible and open – you can make or do what you want to (within reason & depending on the budget!).

The WAI kaupapa is based around participatory art making – not art therapy. To offer art as therapy would suggest that there is a brokenness, problem, or deficit that someone more whole or well could heal. Working in this way potentially sets up a power imbalance that lowers one person (the client) below another (the professional), and places the focus on art as a way of discussing, mending, or healing the brokenness. This way of working totally shifts the focus from our creativity and our resistance to this violence and from all we have done to remain whole and uphold our dignity. The word whakaiti can mean violence or abuse in Te Reo Maori (the Maori language) – but it translates literally as 'to make small'. As women who have experienced violence we know this diminishing approach well – violence is all about power and control - therefore it is crucial that WAI challenges any potential power imbalance. However, we do acknowledge that our collective art making gives us a voice, people who get it, and often just makes us feel good!

A body of literature sits around this concept of participatory art-making within the mental health sector (Brown, 2015; McKeown, Hogarth, Jones et al, 2012; Niadoo, 2005; Parr, 2007 & 2012, Spandler, Secker, Kent, Hacking and Shenton, 2007, 2008 & 2012, Stickley, 2010). The preconceptions around many people viewed as 'patients' led Brown (2012, in Stickley, 2010) to conclude that art as medicine or therapy "formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" upon those who were already stereotyped and marginalised.

Parr (2012) acknowledges the crucial importance of community art-making outside of the clinical setting and interpretation of therapeutic approaches. This understanding is also corroborated in relation to the 'victims' of violence by Jury (2009, p.60) who states that "social change arguably lies outside the scope of any therapeutic or supportive relationship". If participatory, community art making dignifies and empowers those who are described as 'mental health patients' then why can it not offer those same benefits to women who have experienced violence?

Briefly... the core beliefs of WAI are:

We are whole, multi-dimensional people with many ways of 'being' (we are not just victims, survivors, broken, to blame etc)

Our experiences and responses to violence are diverse

WAI is a social justice approach to social change

We challenge deficit understandings and stereotypes

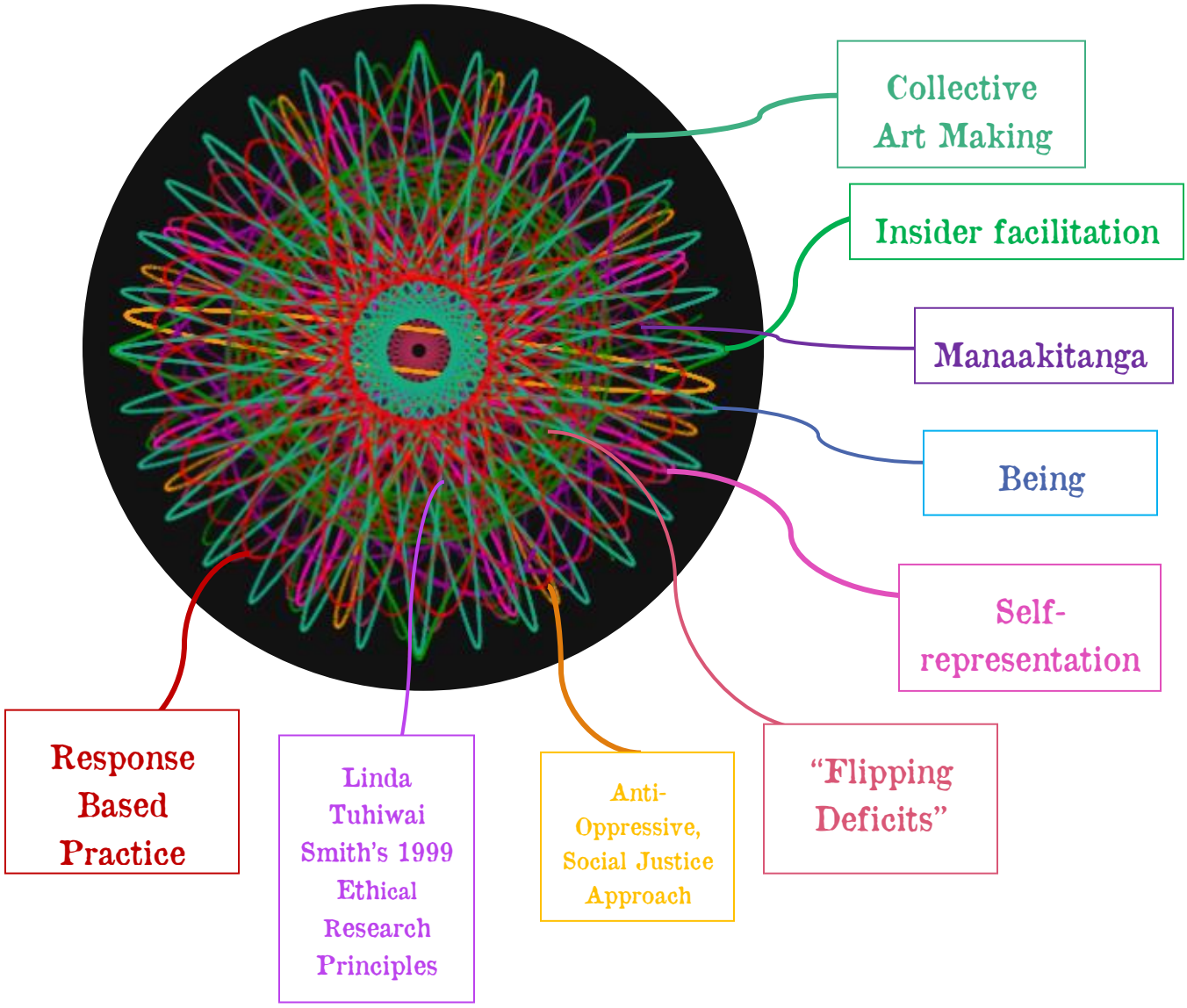
Violence is a choice

We support, respect, and care for the women in our collective

We accept people as they are – see me for me

Language can oppress people or offer dignity

WAI Palmerston North have been up and running since early 2013. This founding collective has offered an opportunity to document the very different way of thinking and working that we have developed as a collective. The WAI Spirographic model of practice based on our journey is pictured, and the elements of this are discussed, below.



Seccombe, 2017, The WAI Spirographic model of Practice

WHAT IS RESPONSE BASED PRACTICE?

Response Based Practice (RBP) is a way of thinking about violence developed by Alan Wade, Linda Coates, and Cathy Richardson. RBP underpins our WAI kaupapa. More information is included at the end of this guide.

Response Based Practice focuses on four key areas.

1. The way that Language is used to:

Hide or reveal violence
Hide or reveal victim responses and resistance
Confuse or make clear the perpetrator's responsibility
Blame and pathologise, or challenge the blaming and pathologising, of victims

2. Social Responses not Effects

Effects based ideas are that 'victims' "ask for it" or are attracted to the violence because of psychological problems or their history. The perpetrator and 'victim' are believed to be passive, and the problem is seen to be in the 'victims' head.

Response based ideas are that 'victims' of violence prefer to be treated with respect and kindness. Both the victim and the perpetrator are active and make decisions. The violence exists in the social world, in a context, and between people. Understanding both the negative and positive social responses to 'victims', and also 'victims' responses to these social responses is key. Language, Social interaction and social context all feed into this understanding.

3. Acknowledging Resistance to violence

Whenever people are treated badly, they always resist. People tend not to notice that victims resist violence. Perpetrators of violence know that victims will resist so they make plans to stop the victim from resisting. Violent and abusive behaviour is done deliberately

Acknowledging our resistance, however subtle, acknowledges and upholds our dignity. Resistance may be very small, and sometimes may take place only within the safety of the mind, but it is always present.

4. Upholding Dignity

Dignity is related to social esteem, mana, self-worth, self-determination, inclusion, respect, manaakitanga (an ethic of care), and mental and physical wellbeing.
(Richardson & Wade, 2013).

LINDA TUHIWAI SMITH'S 1999 ETHICAL RESEARCH PRINCIPLES AND MANAAKITANGA

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, p. 120) Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles guide the relationship and community approach to the WAI project. They offer dignity in this space.

The principles are:

1. Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)
2. Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face)
3. Titiro, whakarongo…korero (look, listen…speak)
4. Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)
5. Kia tupato (be cautious)
6. Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)
7. Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)

These principles also offer a respectful way in to the concept of Manaakitanga –an ethic of care. The WAI model of practice relies heavily on manaakitanga – it sits around and beneath everything we do. For WAI PN this 'ethic of care' involves starting every session with a coffee as we get into our artmaking. The jug goes on and off all day and we eat well. Manaakitanga comes from all sorts of places too – it is not just the facilitators' role – all collective members practice this respectful care of others and our environment. Our kawa acknowledges this.

At WAI we focus on our kaupapa and kawa as a way of upholding the dignity and caring for those involved. Our emphasis on our proficiency (not our deficiencies) and on presenting ourselves in an affirming, professional way publicly also focus the collective on dignifying ways of working together. Shifting our language also shifts the focus from the effects that the violence has had on us to the responses we have had to it – this acknowledges our resistance.

As we are all different it matters that we respect other people's experiences and responses, even if we don't always agree with the way they may frame these. WAI is not a place for competing with, or demeaning other people's realities, but it is a place where oppressive framing and stereotypes are

challenged. At WAI your knowledge matters and your response through art matters. Not just to us but to all of those whose lives we touch through our exhibitions and the publicity around our collective.

The WAI 'infusion' (as one collective member puts it) has a way of shifting negativity and challenging deficits - it is positive, respectful, and up front. It is a way of working that takes a lot of care and thought and we don't get it right all of the time. The dignifying part of this is that we care enough to keep trying – with all of those we interact with.

While we share a knowledge of violence, we all have different ways of thinking, responding and being in the world – if we can accept this and work alongside each other then we offer dignity to others and ourselves. The relationships that are formed through and alongside WAI are crucial to our success.

BEING

The words wellbeing, or ora, hold understandings that can demean those who feel they don't fit within them in our WAI space. Focusing on the concept of wellbeing may then unintentially offer further marginalisation to some collective members. Understanding that this was effecting and confusing us as a collective was a pivotal shift in the model of practice. Hearing that some members felt that they couldn't speak freely about the less positive spaces they may inhabit (because many us of sit in spaces that appear more 'well') was difficult. Our earlier focus on wellbeing was effectively silencing voices within the very space that was intended to ensure they could be heard. An intense and robust discussion around our many layered ways of being offered a space for honest expression of these sentiments and for a much needed shift in the way we speak about and frame these within our kaupapa. The word 'being' has been selected as one that best encompasses what this aspect of the kaupapa means to us at this time. 'Being' for us allows a layered and shifting approach – we can 'be' however we are at any time - confused, sad, angry, active, fierce, calm, enthusiastic, or engaged. There are layers of memory, resistance, oppression, hurt, change, creativity and much more that are then also allowed to exist safely in this space. Working within an understanding of 'being' allows us to be us – and, like any person, we are complex and fluid.

INSIDER FACILITATION

The WAI collective approach offers an ethical opportunity for power relations to be considered and addressed. Setting WAI up in this way, as a collective making art together, allows us the best opportunity to share power with each other. A key principle in addressing potential power imbalances at WAI is that of insider facilitation. If everyone within our collective, including the facilitator, has experienced violence then the space becomes safe enough to hold authentic dialogue without fear of condescension, misunderstanding, sympathy, or 'help' from those outside our experiences. Every woman in our collective has felt humiliated, pitied, or 'less' than 'others' at some time because of the negative social responses she has received to her experiences of violence.

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, & COLLECTIVE ART MAKING APPROACH

The WAI collective's Anti-Oppressive approach "compels us to recognise and unlearn the everyday practices, assumptions, approaches, and methods that help maintain the status quo" (Baines, D. 2011, p.71). If our collective aspire to challenge entrenched and unhelpful ways of responding, through a different approach, then we must be very clear about what we are aiming for and what we do not wish to perpetrate. Broad differences between the common social approaches taken with 'victims of violence' can clearly be seen in the table developed by Baines (2011) below. If WAI compare our approach against this table, there are many correlations. It is clear that we aspire to work within an anti-oppressive framework. We are a collective of 'insiders' or 'survivors' (not professionals or outsiders 'working with' survivors), we seek to share power through a mutual process of art making as advocacy for social change, and we are united through the kaupapa and kawa we have developed. Working in this anti-oppressive way upholds the dignity of our members as it challenges traditional and modern models of practice which individualise, pathologise, and 'help victims'.

MODEL	***Traditional***	***Modern***	***Anti - Oppressive***
View of power	Power over	Power within	Power with
View of the social order	Hierarchical	Egalitarian	Unjust
Institutional processes	Paternalism	Individualism	Solidarity
Nature of relationship	Pedagogical	Neutral and professionally distant	Mutual and dialogic
Nature of intervention	Corrective; punitive	Counselling and personal support; self-help; information and referral	Advocacy, organizing and political action
Examples	Child welfare, social assistance	Sexual assault centres, Addictions counselling	Grassroots anti-poverty groups

Figure 21 Comparison of Practice Models, Baines, 2011,p.70

What has become apparent about this WAI way of working is that the collective make decisions about the art making, the exhibition, the prioritising of resources, the kaupapa and kawa, and the public way we choose to present ourselves, however some of what happens at WAI is not undertaken collectively. The responsibility for budgeting, accessing funding, accessing resources, reporting, media engagement, communication, administration, community relationships and education is undertaken by the facilitator.

Our art making approach is very deliberately not an art therapy approach – it is an active engagement in art making as self-representation and a social justice response to the violence we have experienced. WAI focus on an active engagement in art making as self-representation - this is

a very deliberate approach which challenges the stereotypes and understandings that those outside our experiences and cultures may hold about us. It is a direct response to the negative social responses received by those in the collective. Working in this way is our best attempt to address the disconnection between our experiences and the way we are portrayed in literature, art, and the media.

If WAI were an art therapy based group then there would be an implicit acceptance that those attending were there for therapy - for the help that someone more 'together' could offer. The art works made would also suffer this perception – they would be just another way to expose, analyse and 'fix' the perceived deficiencies of the maker. Indeed, Brown (in Stickley, 2012) asserts that "the application of art as medicine – as therapy – formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" (p.24). This non-therapy, participatory arts based approach is one described through a range of key qualitative arts-based research projects in the field of mental health by Stickley (2012). From this perspective, art is seen as social action, as a political voice, with studios such as ours best described as places to meet and work alongside others who understand. They are places where our creativity is free and valued.

"FLIPPING DEFICITS"

The term 'flipping deficits' is one that has found its way into our WAI vocabulary, along with a range of other rather wry descriptors that we use together to identify who we are and what we do. We have been known to describe ourselves as 'having artism', and to depict the WAI way of working together as the 'WAI infusion'. This humour disguises some very real and pathologising diagnoses, discourses, approaches, and understandings that have been offered to us outside of the WAI space.

The term flipping deficits is an important one as it describes the way that WAI challenge and respond to the many, many deficit representations and negative social responses made to us, as women who have experienced violence. Key to this term is the critical exposure that it brings to those things that continue to oppress us long after the violence has ended.

If we seek a different response, and to change things, then we must expose and re-dress the oppressive perspectives and practices that inhibit change. In order to flip something onto its back you must know it well enough to approach it carefully, and unfortunately we do, as we are often intimate with many of these very negative understandings. Flipping deficits has become a term that describes a complex practice of analysis, discussion, response through art making, and transformation (not necessarily in that order). It is not easy to expose ideologies which are embedded and seen as common sense, but which conceal layers of ongoing power and control (Hadley, 2013), but we attempt this because we have something to say – we want our voices heard and we want others to benefit.

SELF-REPRESENTATION

Despite the action and activism of female artists, and the more open transmission of our stories through art and literature, the attitudes and stereotypes which remain around women who have experienced violence continue to impact on the power we have to represent ourselves. Sharing narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence.

Representing ourselves offers us the opportunity to transform the way we are seen and understood by those outside of our experiences, and to reclaim our bodies, our identities, our autonomy, and our dignity. The alternative to self-representation is often silence - because it offers us the autonomy to accept or refuse specific subject positionings inherent in the discourses of violence and representation. Not saying things can be a form of resistance, a way of protecting the safety of the personal experience which we ourselves own, and of refusing to engage in dialogue which continues to repress and marginalise us (Morgan and Coomes, 2001). If those who know abuse and oppression so intimately must take the subject position of silence then violence will continue.

To challenge these prescribed collective identities we must have the opportunity to call them into question and to offer our own alternatives (Dunn, 2005). Our authentic voices self-representing these experiences, our responses to them, and our identities, offer the best opportunity for change.

What does resistance look like?

Resistance is often something very personal and is related to the individual and their social context. Those outside of this space may not see it or understand that what we are doing is resisting violence. Resistance can be screaming, pushing and fighting but more often it is far more subversive and subtle. It may be as simple as hiding the car keys so that they can't be taken from you, ignoring abusive comments so that they don't escalate into other forms of violence, or wearing layers of clothes to bed to make it harder for an abuser to access your body. Women and children resist men's control of them in so many ways. This resistance allows us dignity and autonomy. We make choices that resist violence, we make choices that keep us safe and protect others. Resistance is complex and intricately related to the nuances of the violence we are experiencing. We are experts at responding to those who inflict violence, because we have to be.

how does our collective run?

WAI are a collective. This means that wherever it is possible all major decisions about what we do and where we head to are collectively made. Your opinion and ideas matter, and you will have autonomy around what you choose to do within the collective.

A lot of the day to day small decisions and housekeeping in our WAI Palmerston North collective are managed by me – mostly to save us all time and ensure that you can focus on making art and not worry about who will get the coffee or what sort of glue we need. As I am also personally responsible to our funders for the finances this also allows me to stay on top of these.

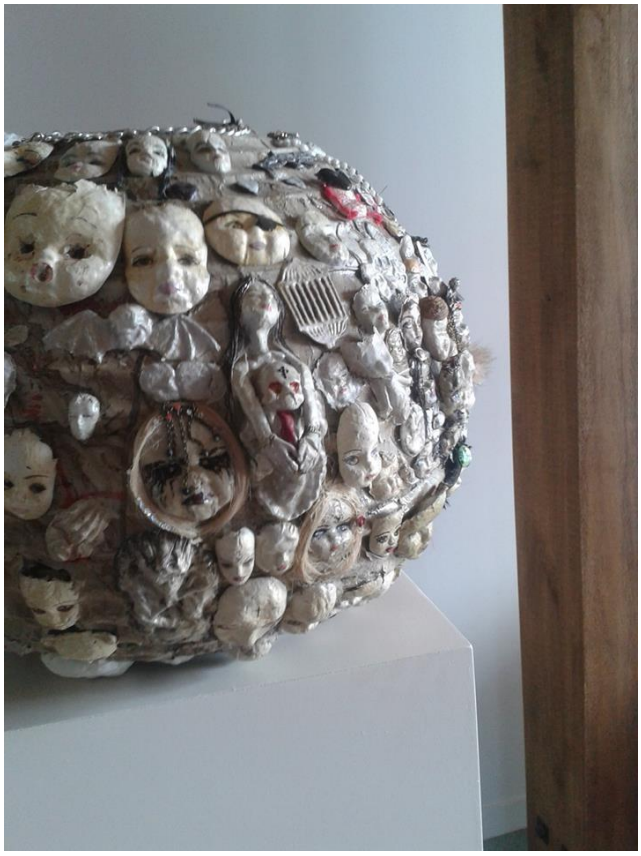
Our kaupapa and kawa guide our interactions with each other and our use of the space. Please get to know what these are all about because they underpin our whole way of working and being with each other. WAI run from an anti-oppressive, anti-deficit, Response Based Practice approach that upholds our dignity, and acknowledges our resistance to violence and our wellbeing or rongoa (there is more about this in the section on Response Based Practice).

Hui (meetings) can be called at any time, by any person. We try to hold a hui (more of a coffee and chat session) about once a month to see where people want to go next and to air any concerns.

We remain autonomous individuals within the collective and we acknowledge the different cultures, experiences, and responses to violence we have.

WAI are anonymous art makers, unless we choose to use our actual names. As the facilitator, I speak publicly about WAI on behalf of the Palmerston North collective, and will ask what people want said before important events. You will never be asked to make yourself known publicly. This is really important as it allows us to say some tough things without worrying about what our ex partners might say or do if they see our work, name, or images of us in the newspaper. This is about keeping you safe and making sure you can say the things you need to.

THE ART-MAKING APPROACH



Making art is what WAI is about.

Our experiences and identity will appear in our work if and when we feel safe / want to share them. It is vital that our ideas are allowed to be expressed however we want to represent them. You may find that you want to make work that isn't about your experiences at all, you may want to create work that is strident and angry, or you may find that what matters to you most is to express who you are now.

The WAI kaupapa is about us – not our perpetrators. We are not usually the violent ones (although we may still be quite angry!) Every piece of work we make has us in it somehow, even if others can't see this.

What you choose to make is completely up to you – there may be parameters; for instance the collective might all be printing posters using letterpress but you might want to print something completely different using woodcut, or you may want to make a book instead...or crochet, weave, etc... It is really important that you do what you want to in the time. There are times during the year when the making is more focused on a specific dialogue that we want to share through our exhibition – there will be agency within this for you.

If you need support and advice then there are lots of experienced art makers in our collective who love to help. If you need resources (within reason and budget allowing!) then just tell your facilitator and she will do what she can to get them organised.

The first few months of art making experiences are non-threatening and are designed to help you learn your way around the studio, get to know people and understand the kaupapa, and to learn new skills, so that you can apply these to your own projects and ideas down the track. It might feel like you are not doing a lot but these skills will open the way for you to make the things you want to down the track. WAI PN make books at the start of every year. In this way we learn new skills and create a private space that is ours for the year – which is really important as an individual within a collective. Moving into a more conceptual space takes time and safety, but it seems to occur quite easily within WAI, if we start out slowly.

Let your facilitator know how this is going for you and what you need from her as you move along – she will do her best to help. Please use your own resources and contacts to source what you need too. If you want to try something or achieve something then you need to make the time to sit with your facilitator or attend hui to talk about this, so that you can be supported with resources, advice or technical skills

WHO ARE WE?

We are everyday people just like you – mothers, grandmothers, daughters, partners, advocates, students, managers, cleaners, artists, and so much more. In Palmerston North we identify as Maori, Pakeha, and Cook Islanders.

We have been through it all – sometimes we are still making our way out, but are safe for now with Women's Refuge, sometimes we have been out for many, many years.

We have been kidnapped, abused, raped, beaten, coerced, and violated physically, culturally, psychologically, financially, and spiritually. We have been held at gunpoint, isolated, controlled, hurt, threatened, and humiliated. Our children and our pets have been used as weapons of control against us. We have taken the terrifying step of leaving. Throughout this process much has been taken from us. We have been seen and responded to in ways that hurt our mana, and do not reflect what is in our hearts. We have been told to 'move on', 'get over it' and 'let it go' but our silence is dangerous when other women continue to experience violence. We grieve for our sense of safety, and the loss of our dreams, connections, hopes, and aspirations. We fight for our children, our identity, our autonomy, and for other women. We have resisted violence and upheld our dignity in every way possible, and we continue to resist the stereotypical beliefs around who we must be as 'vulnerable victims' or 'brave survivors' of this violence. We are diverse, multi-dimensional, and complicated, like anyone else.

We are uniquely individual and we are also a collective. We are WAI.

HOW DO I JOIN? CAN I BRING PEOPLE ALONG?

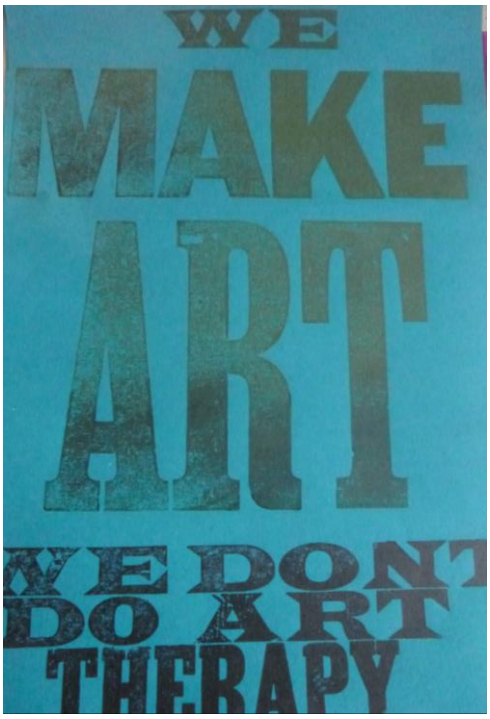
You will have been given this WAI collective members guide by your WAI facilitator or agency advocate. Please consider this an invitation to join our collective. There is no formal joining process just an invitation to visit - come along and make art with us, and see how /or if WAI works for you. If you are nervous you are welcome to bring your advocate with you on your first few WAI days – they can make art and have a cuppa too.

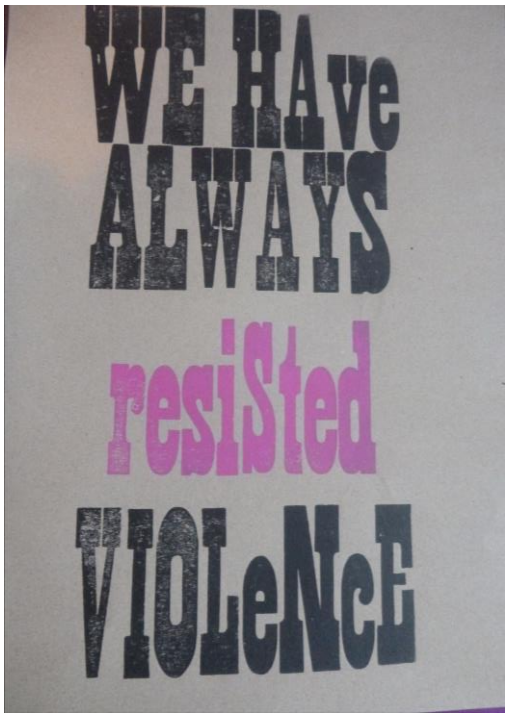
It isn't easy to jump into an unknown group but the WAI focus is strongly on just getting in and making things. Making art together is a great way to get to know people without the awkwardness of just sitting around and chatting – and a huge bonus is that it is fun and you have beautiful things to take home. If you choose to remain part of the WAI collective then you will also be offered the chance to exhibit your work at public exhibitions twice a year.

One of the conditions for the membership is that women coming into WAI have been through (or are attending) a violence education programme or something similar, and that they are currently safe. You may be working one on one with someone also.

If you know people that you think would enjoy working with WAI then please talk to your facilitator about how this could happen. As we are really careful to protect people's safety and privacy we ask that you ***please do not bring or invite any visitors to WAI*** without organizing for them to meet /talk with the facilitator or an advocate first.

and importantly.....


WE
MAKE
ART
WE DON'T
DO ART
THERAPY


WE HAve
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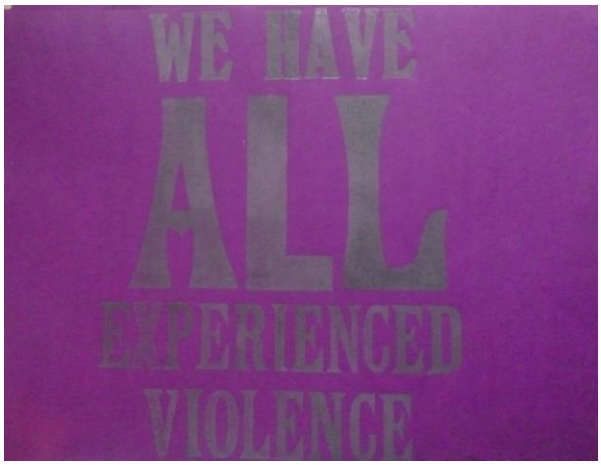

WE HAVE
ALL
EXPERIENCED
VIOLENCE


WE ARE A
COLLeCTiVE

Palmerston North WAI have also developed kawa, or ways of being, together over the past 4 years. Our kawa guide our relationships and our use of the space, and respond directly to our kaupapa. Every WAI collective will develop their own kawa, so these are included as a guide only.

WAI PN KAWA

We respond to our kaupapa:

We acknowledge our resistance to violence and uphold the dignity of everyone in WAI

Our work challenges the myths and stereotypes that marginalise and oppress women who have experienced violence

We are aware of safety – we keep all information about others, their work, and our WAI space private and we do not take photographs of people (or their work unless we ask first)

We don't have to talk about anything unless we want to – WAI is a making space

We respond to each other:

We acknowledge and respect the different physical and emotional spaces that people require to be creative in

We accept collective members however they choose to come to WAI

We talk sensitively and positively about others' art work

We supervise our own children closely if we have to bring them, and we take them home if they disrupt the working energy of the collective

We talk respectfully about any concerns at our hui – we uphold the dignity of everyone involved

We are aware of our resources:

We clean up our own working space including the floor/ paintbrushes/ offcuts / our dishes

We put things back in their proper places when we have finished with them

We use our 'fair share' of resources

We only borrow from the 'Borrowing box' and we return what we borrow

WHAT WE OFFER YOU

The *space and place* to make art – in Palmerston North we work in our beautiful studio every Monday from 9am. We have our own kitchen area, toilet facilities, seating, baby beds and toys, and working spaces for several people. We also have storage areas for your work.

Safety - our studio is only used by us – no one else comes in unless they are invited and this has been agreed on by the collective. You will almost always know when visitors are coming in so you can leave if you are not comfortable. Generally visitors are women like us, or artists, or just good people, and we keep them all to a minimum. We **do not tell outsiders the location of our studio** unless this is absolutely necessary, and we don't bring people along with us unless we have checked it is ok first. The safety of some of our women could easily be compromised if ex partners found out where they were. If you need to meet someone we ask that you go elsewhere.

Tea, coffee and kai are provided.

Basic resources – we keep a stock of paint, ink, paper, fabric, clay, glue, pens and pencils, bits and pieces etc... in our PN studio. The best printmaking paper is kept for our exhibition work, but not much else is off limits. All we ask is that you use a 'fair share' (eg: don't make 20 books for your entire whanau and leave us with no book card!) and clean up/ wash your own plates and cups, brushes, art mess etc... Your collective will develop their own ways of working these things out – your kawa.

Specialised equipment – In Palmerston North we have screens and printing equipment, a printing press, sewing machines, mosaic equipment, and a small kiln, amongst other things

You will be offered opportunities to go out to other artists' studios to work with specialised equipment – letterpress printing and pottery for example.

Any *other resources* you might need within reason can usually be provided – sometimes our budget is pretty tight but we do our best to help you make what you want to if we can manage it.

We also offer you our respect, acceptance and the space to be and do what you need or want to within a community of like-minded women. If you don't want to talk and just want to make work most people are sensitive to this and will let you do what you need to.

Personal projects

You can create, play, try out ideas you've seen and just make things that make you happy – cushions, books, inky paintings, things for you or your home or your family. This work is great to do at the start of the year when you are learning about some of the art making techniques and processes, and it can continue on amongst the collective making projects when we are working towards the exhibition too. Think about who you are and what you want from this collective. To help you develop your ideas and drive your own process we suggest you feed your visual tank as much as possible – Pinterest is a great place to collect images and ideas for making. Visit galleries and exhibitions, ask others (both in and out of the collective) how they have done things, or for help doing something you want to try. And play, play, play – there is no right way at WAI – do things your way. Some of our most powerful work has come from poor quality prints, scribbly idea drawings, ripping things up and remaking them, painting over, and making mistakes, making how you do it and going with what comes easily.

If you have a real drive, passion, or ability in one area we love to see this brought over into our collective exhibition work too eg: one of the women from the PN WAI crochets – see below.

Collective projects

These are the things we develop together and work towards as a collective. You will always have autonomy around what you make, and the chance to use your own voice through your art, even within the collective projects.

The collective works are the ones that involve a concept which we decide together earlier in the year. They are our public voice and as such it is really important that they represent us well – that they work together and look professionally presented. For us to be listened to we must present our work like a proper exhibition, not a whole lot of bits and pieces that we all enjoyed making.

Our kaupapa is about challenging the stereotypes and self-representing our experiences and identities as whole, well, multi-dimensional people. If people see us as 'just a community art group', or decide our work is 'art therapy' then we are not changing attitudes or effecting social change and we will be seen as a group of 'brave survivors' or 'vulnerable victims' making art to make ourselves feel better – not as who we really are, which is so much more than that.

It matters that our voices are heard – because so often everyone else talks about us, to us, and for us, and this does not accurately represent us.

Examples of how this collective art making has worked to date in WAI PN are: our tree installation in the BLOOM 2015 exhibition – we all made our own paper mache fruit with the things that we saw as the fruits of our experience inside them. Every fruit was as different as we all are.

Our Stories of Resistance were also a body of 3 or 4 framed works each, which we made using print, paint and letterpress, but we each told our own story in our own way. What made these 'collective' were the ideas of resistance to violence that we all shared, and the fact that we all used the same sized paper, so they all looked unified when they were framed up.

And our *Manaakitanga* work was a group of handmade individual tea and other bowls grouped together. So much diversity, and yet as a collective artwork they express our unity and solidarity.

FUNDING

As a guide it costs PN WAI around $5000 a year for just our resources and exhibitions, although $8000 would allow us to do so many other things that we are keen to try, and $3000 is just manageable if we use lots of recycled materials and don't pay for outside tutors or equipment and studio hire. On top of this WAI PN also need an extra $5000 to pay for our studio hire. Every year we need to apply for funding to keep WAI up and running.

WAI is a standalone venture that relies on the supporting social agencies for advocacy and advice – but not for funding. All funding is applied for each year from community and art trusts and sources. It is an ongoing worry and a lot of hard work to keep the funding in place each year, so we can keep going.

The facilitator is required to keep all receipts, and complete funding reports to those who have donated money, in a timely manner. It is also really important to maintain these relationships and keep those who support us up to date on how we are spending their money. Our exhibitions and public Facebook page are key to this, and it is hard work to maintain our contacts. Many of those who donate to WAI have a genuine interest in what we are making and how we are getting on. It is important to the integrity of WAI that these relationships are respected and cared for.

EXHIBITION

The practical aspects of installing exhibitions are the responsibility of the facilitator, but they may need help to label and move work. As WAI work anonymously this means that you cannot normally safely participate in the exhibition curatorial process in a public venue.

WAI collective members have the right to opt out of exhibiting their work – however you may still continue to participate in the making process. Separate permission will be requested for the exhibition.

Each woman owns all of her own work and all copyrights to this. All artwork will be taken home at the end of each year. We just don't have the space to store your work for you after this time.

Currently each WAI collective will exhibit separately. It is hoped that down the track the wider WAI Aotearoa network can hold national exhibitions, showcasing a selection of our most thought-provoking works.

Each WAI collective will decide how they want to approach their exhibition opening.

The facilitator may need help setting up/ providing the kai for the opening.

WAI exhibition openings to date have not involved alcohol.

For many of us the exhibition is a huge deal – putting out not only our art work but our personal experience and ourselves is incredibly daunting, but it can be really empowering. Seeing our narratives respected through professional presentation is really important. For WAI PN, exhibition is often an emotional time – we feel pride, fear, and a connection to 'outsiders', and we see the impact our narratives have on our families and other viewers. It is also stressful finishing work to a deadline, as we often tend to leave some of this to the last minute!

Please be aware we may all need a bit of extra support and patience at this time.

THE MEDIA

It is important that you know that any work shown through the exhibition process will be seen by the public (and this may include previous partners). It may also be reproduced visually in the media. You can use a pseudonym or remain anonymous on your titles. Realistic self-portraits are not recommended, except under consultation with the agency you were invited by.

Publicity is great for the WAI collective – if it is accurate. WAI PN need around $10-12, 000 in funding each year to run, buy resources, and pay for the studio hire, so being written about and publicised is good for those who support us to see, and good to attach to funding applications.

I am a woman who has experienced violence, the facilitator of WAI PN, and also a researcher who has done a lot of reading, writing, and thinking about violence. As such, I am extremely controlling with media and always assert our kaupapa both verbally and in writing – the last thing WAI need when we have worked as makers all year is to be portrayed as disempowered 'victims' or 'survivors' of violence who are 'doing art as therapy' to make ourselves feel better! We are art makers self-representing our experiences. I prefer the term 'women who have experienced violence' to 'victim' or 'survivor'. Violence is only part of our wider experience and identity, not the sum total of who we are. Our art work privileges our authentic experiences and identities over the stereotypes and myths that marginalise and discriminate against us.

The way those outside our experience portray us is a huge reason for us speaking for ourselves. The last thing we want is for publicity to place us neatly back in the boxes that we are deconstructing through the WAI collective process.

COMMUNICATION

Clear and regular communication is key to holding the collective together. Our two main forms of communication are text message and a shared secret Facebook page. Communication between the different facilitators, and between the Refuges and their facilitators may be less frequent and probably achieved through visits, phone calls, emails, or hui.

Cellphone

WAI PN all have my cell phone number and I have each of theirs. I use these numbers to make contact with members about WAI if I need to, but most of our contact is made through the WAI Secret Facebook page. You can choose who else in the collective that you want to have your phone numbers or who you friend on Facebook – if anyone – and arrange this with those people. You are asked not to share these contact details with anyone outside of the group unless you are given permission to do so.

I regularly message the times the studio is open, and the resources that are available to the collective on the Monday. Sometimes this is a reminder that we are going to work elsewhere and of the time we will leave and return. Collective members can also message to remind me if they needed specific equipment, a ride, or won't be coming.

WAI online

Photos of WAI collective members may not be taken or posted anywhere online. Photos of other peoples' work can be taken with their permission.

Our PN WAI secret Facebook page is a busy place, with members posting constantly – not just art related things but motivational quotes, exhibition openings, or things that they think other members may appreciate. It has become a great way for us to remain in contact and develop our relationships outside of our kanohi ki kanohi (face to face) time.

This is a page that only the administrator can allow people to join. Only the members joined to this page can see the posts. Refuge managers or other agency staff members are encouraged to participate so that they can stay up to date with what WAI are making and can join in the inspiration also. This is a great place to add art techniques and videos of how to do things from YouTube, or images of inspiring works similar to what we are trying to achieve in our mahi.

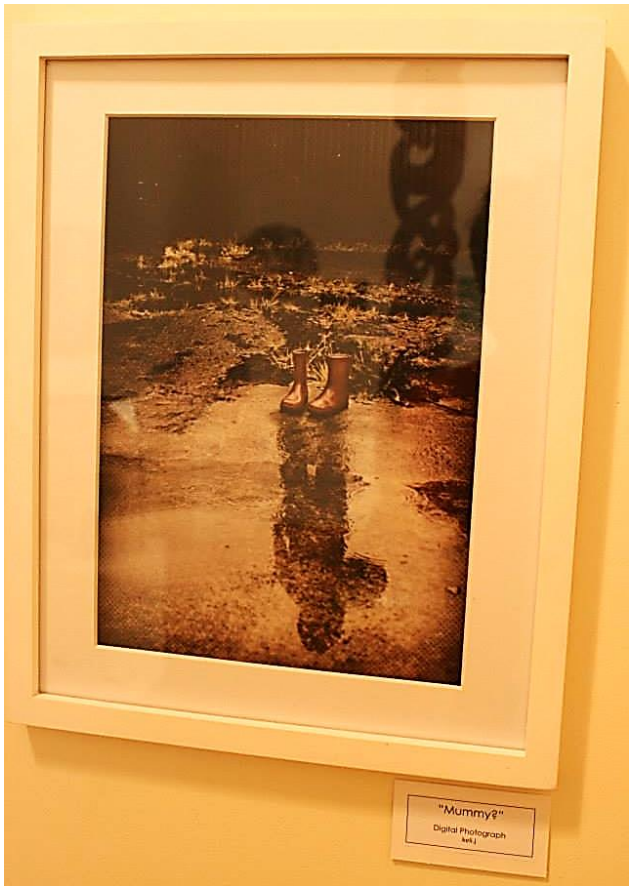
Our public WAI Facebook page is a great place to share our public work, and our studio process work. The WAI public Facebook page is a community page. Please note that this is a place for those who support our collective to see what we want them to see. This is not a page for other collective members to add posts to as it is a public space and these posts and photos can be seen by anyone on Facebook.

Down the track I am keen to develop a 'WAI online' art-making collective – to allow women who cannot (or are unwilling) to participate in the kanohi ki kanohi model to make art and be part of a community of makers who have all experienced violence, from home. It would be great to have these online communities attached to Refuges, facilitators, and working WAI collectives, so that they can be included in the Facebook pages and, if they want to, their work can still be shown in exhibitions. Developing these relationships may open the door for women to step into the kanohi ki kanohi model down the track.

But for now, if you would like to be part of WAI but don't feel up to coming in each week, or live out of town, then there are ways to get to know people and stay in touch via Facebook. You can also make some work at home and share some of the resources too. We understand that for some of us coming along to a group setting, or even leaving the house, can be so intimidating that we might never make it – even if we love making art and want to participate. We are happy to have you involved in whatever way is safe and comfortable for you. So far our 'at home' WAI PN members have been able to have work printed by other women in the collective, to have clay collected for them and dropped back for firing, and to share the work that they want to with us on the secret Facebook page.

CHILDREN

Keeping our children safe



The safety of children matters a lot to all of us. If we feel children are not safe then we expect our collective members to speak up about this to the facilitator or an agency advocate. As a collective we are all responsible for the safety of all of our children.

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's children then we ask you to be proactive and sensitive.

We are here to support your efforts to keep your family safe, not to judge you if this becomes difficult. There is a lot of support in the community and this can easily be accessed – just ask.

Children coming into the studio

Although we love and appreciate children and are happy for them to come in to the studio we don't encourage you to bring them. Often WAI is the only space women have where they can focus on themselves and their art-making, and this is difficult if they we are worried about children touching things, being hurt, or are bothered by their noise and movement. Tiny babies who are not on the move yet are always welcome.

Safety is a concern when older children are in the studio space. WAI PN have kerosene, toxic printmaking gels, turps, and broken plates, mirrors and glass. We are also all busy focusing on our work and may not notice small people underfoot.

WAI PN manage this through our kawa, and we have a children's art / play area so that we can contain their movements and their making and ensure they are not using our good materials and paper accidentally. In our WAI PN collective children may come along as long as their parent/caregiver actively supervises them – which usually means that this person gets no making done themselves. Some days women are happy to just come for a quick chat and a coffee when they have their kids with them. We are all happy to have a cuddle or play for a bit, but please don't take advantage of us helping out – we come to WAI to make our own work and we want to do that.

If you need support to get your preschoolers into daycare for the times you are at WAI then help can be given with this process – by contacting local childcare centres, or writing letters for WINZ etc… again, just ask.

Safety and wellbeing

Criteria for participation in WAI

The organisations involved will select women to invite to WAI. It is a condition of the WAI joining process that you have completed, or are currently in, a Women's Refuge education programme (or similar support and education), and that you are safe.

WAI PN have found, however, that women may not remain safe during their involvement with our collective. Should your safety be compromised you will be referred back to the agency that invited you to join WAI, for advocacy and advice, but you will not be excluded from WAI, unless there is a real risk to the safety of our collective or individuals within it. Ongoing involvement in WAI may prove a very necessary support should your circumstances change in this way.

Ongoing violence

As above, you will be welcome to remain involved in the collective should you experience violence during your involvement with WAI, providing safety is not compromised. In these circumstances it is expected that agency advocacy and support would increase, and that the WAI facilitator would remain in close contact with you and the agency. Absences from WAI would be shared with your advocate. Agency staff are always welcome in the WAI space, and regular contact with the collective may make this advocacy a more natural part of the space, especially during times of higher need. Staff are also welcome to come along and make work with the women – so visits can be fun!

Getting help, support and advocacy if you need it

All women attending WAI will be given support packs during their first collective hui. The packs will include contact details for support, counselling, and advocacy. These packs will be created with the advice and guidance of each of the agencies involved. Extra packs will also be available in the space, so they can be taken again if lost, or for women visiting who are interested in participating in WAI. If you would like to talk to someone then please let me know if I can suggest options. Most agencies can be contacted directly, so no one needs to know who you are involved with unless you choose to tell them. Please know that any information we share privately remains between us.

Comments on others' work

WAI PN cover this with our kawa, but each collective will need to set the tone around how comments are given and received. We don't tend to ask personal questions, and upholding members' dignity or mana is key.

Visitors

All involved agencies' staff are always welcome in the WAI space and can call in without notice.

Women interested in joining WAI are also always welcome but should contact the facilitator or their agency advocate before coming in.

Agency volunteers are welcome by arrangement with the facilitator.

Outside artists and speakers, or those interested in WAI, may visit by arrangement also. Outside art tutors add an extra element to WAI, as do visits out to specialised studio spaces and galleries. Limiting these 'outsiders' to just one or two artists or groups that have a real respect and care for our kaupapa works best for us. All 'outsider' artists and tutors will be required to sign confidentiality forms.

All upcoming visits, times and the purpose of these visits (apart from those by agency staff) will be clearly communicated to WAI collective members well ahead of the time – at WAI the week before, or via text or Facebook message at least a day ahead. This allows you to opt out: leave, or not come in should you feel uncomfortable.

Please note:

It is expected that any visitors to the WAI space are informed and respectful of our kaupapa Our PN WAI collective members become quite defensive if visitors see them as participating in art as therapy, or want to 'help' us - WAI are a collective of art-makers not a therapy based group.

The facilitator will ensure WAI visitors are kept to a minimum.

Attendance and membership

WAI operates once weekly in Palmerston North. Previously we have worked on two days a week, but I found this a really big commitment and would not recommend it.

As a general guide 3 hours per session, per week, is long enough for our collective at the start of the year. We can achieve a lot in this time, clean up and then hopefully have some head space before we collect children from daycare, kindy or school, or head back to work or other activities. Starting out in a group which is about self-representing our narratives of violence can be tiring, until we know how this will work for us. Getting to know others and developing relationships also requires energy. This is our time to go slow with the talking and ensure the wairua of the space develops through active art-making.

Once our collective starts to feel established and connected then the length of the sessions may be extended up to six hours. Longer sessions are really useful towards the end of the year when exhibition work starts being prepared.

You may attend for as often and as long as you choose to. You have no obligation to attend – this is not a course or class, just an art making space. Life is busy and sometimes we don't feel like going anywhere, or sometimes women only want to call in for a cuppa and a chat, and don't choose to make work. We have become used to enjoying whoever turns up, however they turn up, and

supporting whatever they feel like doing. As we work autonomously we can all be doing different things at different times anyway, and once we have learnt skills we are usually happy to share these with those who were not there on that day – this is how our collective spirit develops. This may feel a bit chaotic but autonomy and the collective spirit are crucial to WAIs' success.

It is important to remember that WAI is not a 'class' or 'course' with a 'teacher', but a collective with a facilitator who is also a collective member (which means she will be making work too – as often as she can manage it).

Becoming a WAI collective member is not just a one year long privilege. As a collective our members can remain and continue to participate for as long as they like. WAI PN have almost all of our founding members still, although one or two have moved cities or no longer feel the need to come each week.

This ongoing membership can be problematic when resourcing. WAI PN have prioritised the resourcing of new members each year. A hui was held to discuss how we would ensure that new members have the same opportunities that existing members have had. WAI PN volunteered to bring their own resources, come for a shorter period each week or make more work at home and meet less often so that new members could enjoy the same benefits. To date we have not had to implement these suggestions as we have been able to manage funding carefully so all members can continue to fully participate.

Transport

WAI PN have managed transport in different ways. In our first year we paid a koha to our local 'Street Van' to pick up and drop off women to the weekly session. Since then women have largely made their own way to WAI, as we are now much closer to the central bus depot.

WAI PN do use the Refuge Van for transport on occasion when we head out of Palmerston North to work in a printmaking studio in Feilding or a pottery studio in Marton. When we are financially able to we offer a koha to Refuge for this. We also hired a van for the day when we went down to Wellington for the Domestic Violence Protest March in September 2014 – an expensive option but it meant we could all participate (masked for anonymity – see the photo in the section on "who are we"), and could visit galleries on the way back home – something which we all really enjoyed doing together.

I have also made the commitment to pick up and drop women from the Safe House when we have participants living there, as it is a long way from our studio, and sometimes just too tiring for women to organise themselves. Collective members may also be happy to help each other out, once you know and trust each other. As I use my own petrol to collect and drop people I ask that you find your own way to WAI PN if at all possible please (I am a student and don't make a lot of money!), but I am happy to help out now and then if you are stuck for any reason.

A SUMMARY

WAI are a collective of art makers. We don't do art therapy!

We share responsibility and decision making.

For safety we work anonymously and the location of our studio is protected.

We offer care and concern (manaakitanga) to others in the collective

Our kaupapa and kawa are crucial – please get to know them well

We acknowledge our resistance to violence and uphold the dignity / mana of all WAI members

Please stay in touch. It matters to me that being involved with our WAI collective is positive and beneficial for everyone involved. I want to hear how WAI works for you – or doesn't, so that I can make this model of practice as useful as possible for everyone involved.

Again – thank you for what you are about to undertake and may your WAI journey be valuable and fulfilling.

Nga mihi nui, Karen

USEFUL CONTACTS

The WAI studio has a basic range of art making supplies and a very limited budget. If you can access any extra or special supplies yourself then that ensures the collective can fairly share the studio supplies and that they last longer.

Menzshed – are a fantastic group of men who will assist with community woodworking projects

www.ordermax.co.nz/Art-Supplies

www.warehousestationery.co.nz/art

www.gordonharris.co.nz/

www.impressionsnelson.co.nz/fine-art-supplies.htm

www.encausticart.co.nz

https://www.tanjis.co.nz/

www.montmarte.net/stockist

WAI PN also use Spotlight, Uncle Bills (good cheap paint, brushes, sponges, plaster bandage, gold foil, pins, needles...the list is endless), Mitre 10 and Bunnings (for wood, spray paint, plaster, black plastic, tools etc..) and buy cheap frames for exhibition from The Warehouse (we usually have to re-glue these, and often spray paint them to a colour we like), and order our clay online (there are several suppliers depending on the type of clay required).

Free suppliers – it helps to make friends with people in your community

Arts / recycling stores

Businesses that have excess polystyrene, broken glass and tiles, packaging and paper

Tradespeople often have bits of wood, off cuts, old tools etc that they may donate

Op shops – great places for fabrics, frames, jars, old music etc

http://www.artistsalliance.org.nz/html/artist_spaces.php - working for visual artists – careers, networks, advocacy – offers links to many other sites

http://www.tlc.ac.nz/ - online learning institution in the Wellington region

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Appendix B

WAI – THE WOMEN'S ART INITIATIVE

Art making as resistance and response to Violence

Information package for Facilitators

Contents

The Women's Art Initiative WAI

You have received this guide because you have been invited to facilitate a WAI collective. As I know how busy artists always are your involvement will be kept to a minimum – and it is clearly outlined in this document.

This guide is a working document and a draft. Please scribble notes on it, identify gaps and questions and I will ensure that these points are covered clearly in the final document. Your input is crucial to the success of the ongoing success of the WAI model of practice.

I will maintain regular contact with you, your supporting Agency, and your WAI collective. I look forward to getting to know everyone through this process, and will offer as much help as I am able to.

Thank you for having the enthusiasm and foresight to participate in this opportunity to work as a WAI facilitator. I hope that everyone involved will enjoy the positive energy that comes from art-making within this collective.

In the spirit of WAI

Karen Seccombe (McIntyre)

Phone 0273422448 or email studio_kimbolton@outlook.com

Why (WAI) art?

What happens to women once they leave the safe bubble of Women's Agency?

Walking away from the advocacy, the safe house, the education programme, and many of those who have supported us through the 'crisis' is generally positive – it may mean we are heading into a safer space. Society expects us then to get on with our lives as 'survivors', and put this traumatic time behind us. But we walk back into a world where our experiences of violence marginalise us. We sit uncomfortably within a society which ignores, minimises, and excuses what has happened to us. Our private realities will not match the public perception of us as "vulnerable victims" or "brave survivors" of violence. Our resistance to this violence will be hidden, minimised, unacknowledged, and ignored. We will rarely have the chance to represent our own stories because experts and spokespeople will speak on our behalf. We will be seen as too ashamed or damaged to speak for ourselves. This is our reality.

How do we challenge these stereotypes and assert ourselves as whole, well, people when our identities have so often been defined by the media, police, medical practitioners, psychologists, social service agencies, our ex-partners, our families, and those outside our lived experiences?

Sharing these narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. Research backs this: Jones (in Hogan, 2012) discusses the difficulty of women sharing their narratives of abuse with friends and family or wider society and acknowledges the unbearable weight of pain and disgust these narratives may cause others. The difficulty of voicing experiences of violence is also acknowledged by Jury (2009) and Walton (2010).

The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence. The language which sits around this violence holds such an emotionally meaningless weight that it fails miserably in capturing our lived realities. For example: the word "rape" can never portray the reality of being raped.

How can women speak of these unspeakable acts of violence in a way that is socially sanctioned outside of the safety of Women's Agency? If they cannot share these core experiences with 'outsiders'

then how can women feel connected and empowered, or even contextualise them? Our avenue becomes silence. If you don't talk then you are not judged.

Art making (as opposed to art therapy) offers an opportunity to self-represent these experiences without the need for words. Art making about our experiences allows us the autonomy of speaking for ourselves, showing our experiences from our perspective, in a way that does not further disempower or pathologise us. Art making as a collective, where we can remain anonymous if we choose to, holds even more power. The solidarity experienced in making art together is viewed by Levine and Levine (2011) as essential to the restoration of kinship and the sense of being part of a living community; "the arts are also capable of holding the experience of mourning what an individual or group has lost. Mourning and celebration are two essential ways in which art-making can touch the essence of being human. Both our tears and our laughter can hold us together" (p.29). If this solidarity is with others who know violence then there is no careful tip-toeing around – we can speak openly and understand readily.

The potential for social change inherent in the power of image making offers not only a mediation between individuals and collectives but also between "cultural, universal, transpersonal and personal meanings" (Jones, 2012, p.48) - it may demand responses to injustice. In this way art becomes not only a voice for us, but a social action – a way of creating change, challenging the stereotypes and myths that sit around who we are and what the lived reality of this violence was like. It is an opportunity rarely afforded us.

WAI is that opportunity.

The WAI kaupapa and kawa

Our WAI kaupapa recognises the history of oppression, colonisation, and patriarchal power in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and acknowledges the ongoing, shifting nature of these discourses. We challenge misinformation and misrepresentation, and the authority of others over our realities.

WAI focuses on creating an environment where women are safe and have autonomy. They are safe to share their experiences through art making, safe to talk or not talk, safe because everyone in this environment has experienced violence. Making art together places the focus on our creativity - not our vulnerability, our brokenness, or our resilience. WAI upholds our dignity through the ongoing acknowledgement of our resistance to this violence (a Response Based Practice approach) and an ethic of care or manaakitanga. Our art work is about us – our experiences, our responses to these, our identities, relationships, and our desire to see social change. To date the artworks produced by WAI overwhelmingly demonstrate our strength, our resistance, and our empowerment. They also share the darkness of this violence, but in a way that has surprised and moved viewers, because of its colour and positivity.

WAI is insider facilitated – it is not an art ‘class’ with a ‘teacher’, as this would create a power dynamic that would preclude collectivism. While the facilitator takes responsibility she is also a member of the collective – it is a difficult role, balancing responsibility with membership.

The WAI kaupapa is based around participatory art making – not art therapy. To offer art as therapy would suggest that there was a brokenness that someone more whole could heal.

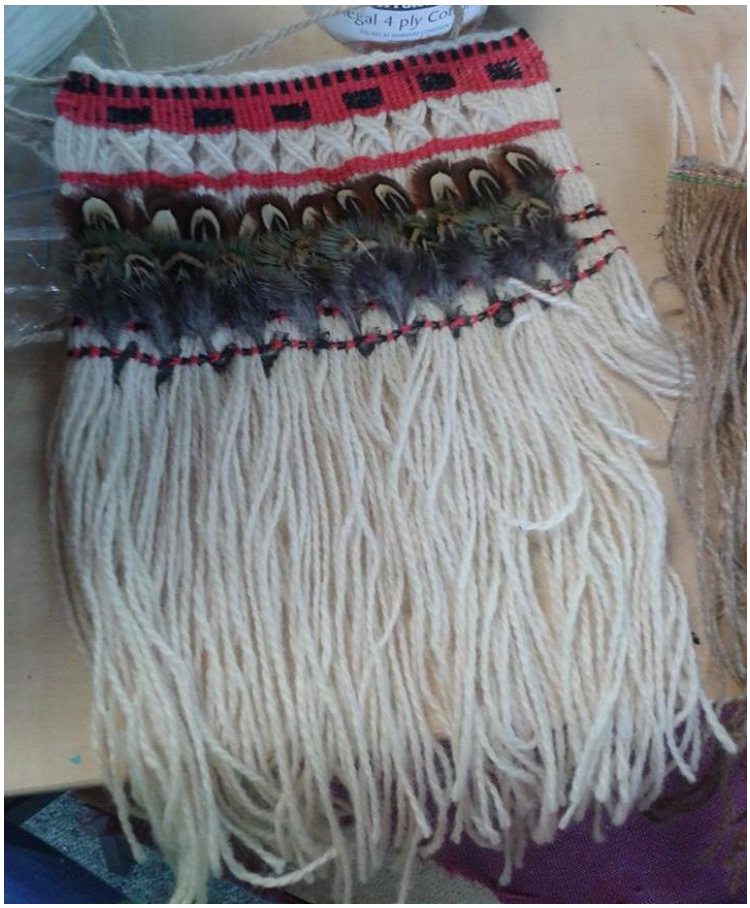
A body of literature sits around this concept of participatory art-making within the mental health sector (Brown, 2015; McKeown, Hogarth, Jones et al, 2012; Niadoo, 2005; Parr, 2007 & 2012, Spandler, Secker, Kent, Hacking and Shenton, 2007, 2008 & 2012, Stickley, 2010). The preconceptions around many people viewed as 'patients' led Brown (2012) to conclude that art as medicine or therapy "formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" upon those who were already stereotyped and marginalised.

Parr (2012) acknowledges the crucial importance of community art-making outside of the clinical setting and interpretation of therapeutic approaches. This understanding is also corroborated in relation to the 'victims' of violence by Jury (2009, p.60) who states that "social change arguably lies outside the scope of any therapeutic or supportive relationship". If participatory, community art making dignifies and empowers those who are described as 'mental health patients' then why can it not offer those same benefits to women who have experienced violence?

The WAI research and facilitation are underpinned and guided by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's 1999 ethical research principles. They are crucial to the development of our relationships.

The principles are:

1. *Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)*
2. *Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face)*
3. *Titiro, whakarongo…korero (look, listen…speak)*
4. *Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)*
5. *Kia tupato (be cautious)*
6. *Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)*
7. *Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)*



Palmerston North WAI have also developed kawa, or ways of being, together over the past 3 years. Our kawa guide our relationships and our use of the space, and respond directly to our kaupapa. Every WAI collective will develop their own kawa, so these are included as a guide only.

WAI PN KAWA

We respond to our kaupapa:

- *We acknowledge our resistance to violence and uphold the dignity of everyone in WAI*
- *Our work challenges the myths and stereotypes that marginalise and stereotype women who have experienced violence*
- *We are aware of safety – we keep <u>all</u> information about others, their work, and our WAI space private and we do not take photographs of people (or their work unless we ask first)*
- *We don't have to talk about anything unless we want to – WAI is a making space*

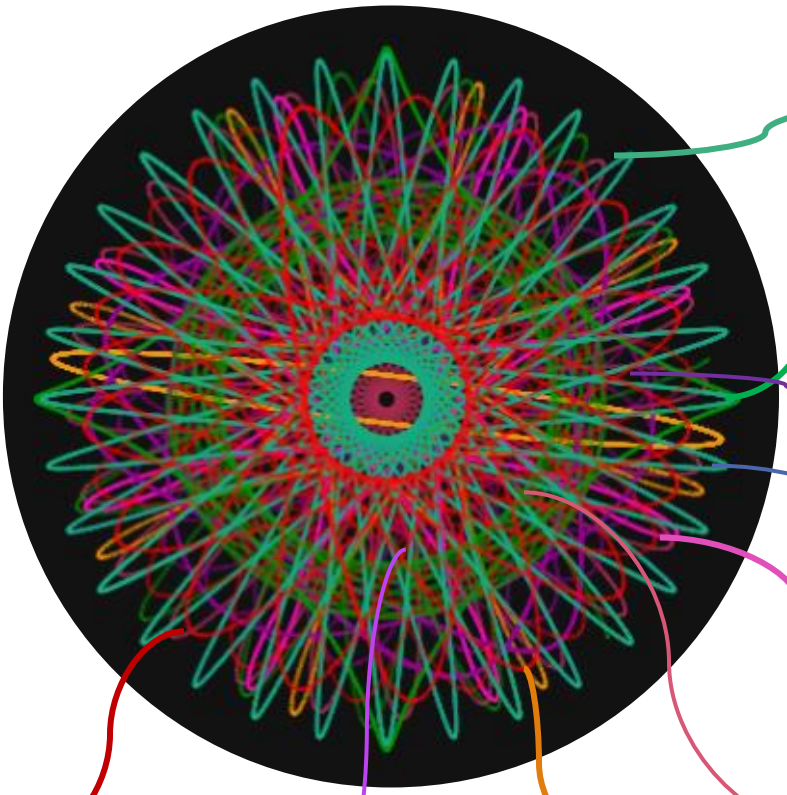
We respond to each other:

- *We acknowledge and respect the different physical and emotional spaces that people require to be creative in*
- *We accept collective members however they choose to come to WAI*
- *We talk sensitively and positively about others' art work*
- *We supervise our own children closely if we have to bring them, and we take them home if they disrupt the working energy of the collective*
- *We talk respectfully about any concerns at our hui – we uphold the dignity of everyone involved*

We are aware of our resources:

- *We clean up our own working space including the floor/ paintbrushes/ offcuts*
- *We put things back in their places when we have finished with them*
- *We use our 'fair share' of resources*
- *We only borrow from the 'Borrowing box' and we return what we borrow*

What does the WAI pilot model of practice look like?



Collective Art Making

Insider facilitation

Manaakitanga

Being

Self-representation

"Flipping Deficits"

Anti-Oppressive, Social Justice

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 1999 Ethical Research Principles

Response Based Practice

What is Response Based Practice?

Response Based Practice (RBP) is a way of thinking about violence developed by Alan Wade, Linda Coates, and Cathy Richardson. RBP underpins our WAI kaupapa. More information is included at the end of this guide.

Response Based Practice focuses on four key areas.

1. The way that Language is used to:

Hide or reveal violence

Hide or reveal victim responses and resistance

Confuse or make clear the perpetrator's responsibility

Blame and pathologise, or challenge the blaming and pathologising, of victims

2. Social Responses not Effects

Effects based ideas are that 'victims' "ask for it" or are attracted to the violence because of psychological problems or their history. The perpetrator and 'victim' are believed to be passive, and the problem is seen to be in the 'victims' head.

Response based ideas are that 'victims' of violence prefer to be treated with respect and kindness. Both the victim and the perpetrator are active and make decisions. The violence exists in the social world, in a context, and between people. Understanding both the negative and positive social responses to 'victims', and also 'victims' responses to these social responses is key. Language, Social interaction and social context all feed into this understanding.

3. Acknowledging Resistance to violence

Whenever people are treated badly, they always resist. People tend not to notice that victims resist violence. Perpetrators of violence know that victims will resist so they make plans to stop the victim from resisting. Violent and abusive behaviour is done deliberately

Acknowledging our resistance, however subtle, acknowledges and upholds our dignity. Resistance may be very small, and sometimes may take place only within the safety of the mind, but it is always present.

4. Upholding Dignity

Dignity is related to social esteem, mana, self-worth, self-determination, inclusion, respect, manaakitanga (an ethic of care), and mental and physical wellbeing.

(Richardson & Wade, 2013).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 1999 Ethical Research Principles and Manaakitanga

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, p. 120) Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles (outlined above) guide the relationship and community approach to the WAI project. They offer dignity in this space.

These principles also offer a respectful way in to the concept of Manaakitanga –an ethic of care. The WAI model of practice relies heavily on manaakitanga – it sits around and beneath everything we do. For WAI PN this 'ethic of care' involves starting every session with a coffee as we get into our artmaking. The jug goes on and off all day and we eat well. Manaakitanga comes from all sorts of places too – it is not just the facilitators' role – all collective members practice this respectful care of others and our environment. Our kawa acknowledges this.

At WAI we focus on our kaupapa and kawa as a way of upholding the dignity and caring for those involved. Our emphasis on our proficiency (not our deficiencies) and on presenting ourselves in an affirming, professional way publicly also focus the collective on dignifying ways of working together. Shifting our language also shifts the focus from the effects that the violence has had on us to the responses we have had to it – this acknowledges our resistance.

As we are all different it matters that we respect other people's experiences and responses, even if we don't always agree with the way they may frame these. WAI is not a place for competing with, or demeaning other people's realities, but it is a place where oppressive framing and stereotypes are challenged. At WAI our knowledge matters and our responses through art matter. Not just to us but to all of those whose lives we touch through our exhibitions and the publicity around our collective.

The WAI 'infusion' (as one collective member puts it) has a way of shifting negativity and challenging deficits - it is positive, respectful, and up front. It is a way of working that takes a lot of care and thought and we don't get it right all of the time. The dignifying part of this is that we care enough to keep trying – with all of those we interact with.

While we share a knowledge of violence, we all have different ways of thinking, responding and being in the world – if we can accept this and work alongside each other then we offer dignity to others and ourselves. The relationships that are formed through and alongside WAI are crucial to our success.

Being

The words wellbeing, or ora, hold understandings that can demean those who feel they don't fit within them in our WAI space. Focusing on the concept of wellbeing may then unintentially offer further marginalisation to some collective members. Understanding that this was effecting and confusing us as a collective was a pivotal shift in the model of practice. Hearing that some members felt that they couldn't speak freely about the less positive spaces they may inhabit (because many us of sit in spaces that appear more 'well') was difficult. Our earlier focus on wellbeing was effectively silencing voices within the very space that was intended to ensure they could be heard. An intense and robust discussion around our many layered ways of being offered a space for honest expression of these sentiments and for a much needed shift in the way we speak about and frame these within our kaupapa. The word 'being' has been selected as one that best encompasses what this aspect of the kaupapa means to us at this time. 'Being' for us allows a layered and shifting approach – we can 'be' however we are at any time - confused, sad, angry, active, fierce, calm, enthusiastic, or engaged. There are layers of memory, resistance, oppression, hurt, change, creativity and much more that are then also allowed to exist safely in this space. Working within an understanding of 'being' allows us to be us – and, like any person, we are complex and fluid.

Insider facilitation

The WAI collective approach offers an ethical opportunity for power relations to be considered and addressed. Setting WAI up in this way, as a collective making art together, allows us the best opportunity to share power with each other. A key principle in addressing potential power imbalances at WAI is that of insider facilitation. If everyone within our collective, including the facilitator, has experienced violence then the space becomes safe enough to hold authentic dialogue without fear of condescension, misunderstanding, sympathy, or 'help' from those outside our experiences. Every woman in our collective has felt humiliated, pitied, or 'less' than 'others' at some time because of the negative social responses she has received to her experiences of violence.

Anti-Oppressive, Social Justice, & COLLECTIVE ART MAKING Approach

The WAI collective's Anti-Oppressive approach "compels us to recognise and unlearn the everyday practices, assumptions, approaches, and methods that help maintain the status quo" (Baines, D. 2011, p.71). If our collective aspire to challenge entrenched and unhelpful ways of responding, through a different approach, then we must be very clear about what we are aiming for and what we do not wish to perpetrate. Broad differences between the common social approaches taken with 'victims of violence' can clearly be seen in the table developed by Baines (2011) below. If WAI compare our approach against this table, there are many correlations. It is clear that we aspire to work within an anti-oppressive framework. We are a collective of 'insiders' or 'survivors' (not professionals or outsiders 'working with' survivors), we seek to share power through a mutual process of art making as advocacy for social change, and we are united through the kaupapa and kawa we have developed. Working in this anti-oppressive way upholds the dignity of our members as it challenges traditional and modern models of practice which individualise, pathologise, and 'help victims'.

What has become apparent about this WAI way of working is that the collective make decisions about the art making, the exhibition, the prioritising of resources, the kaupapa and kawa, and the public way we choose to present ourselves, however some of what happens at WAI is not undertaken collectively. The responsibility for budgeting, accessing funding, accessing resources, reporting, media engagement, communication, administration, community relationships and education is undertaken by the facilitator.

Our art making approach is very deliberately not an art therapy approach – it is an active engagement in art making as self-representation and a social justice response to the violence we have experienced. WAI focus on an active engagement in art making as self-representation - this is a very deliberate approach which challenges the stereotypes and understandings that those outside our experiences and cultures may hold about us. It is a direct response to the negative social responses received by those in the collective. Working in this way is our best attempt to address the disconnection between our experiences and the way we are portrayed in literature, art, and the media.

MODEL	*Traditional*	*Modern*	*Anti - Oppressive*
View of power	Power over	Power within	Power with
View of the social order	Hierarchical	Egalitarian	Unjust
Institutional processes	Paternalism	Individualism	Solidarity
Nature of relationship	Pedagogical	Neutral and professionally distant	Mutual and dialogic
Nature of intervention	Corrective; punitive	Counselling and personal support; self-help; information and referral	Advocacy, organizing and political action
Examples	Child welfare, social assistance	Sexual assault centres, Addictions counselling	Grassroots anti-poverty groups

Figure 21 Comparison of Practice Models, Baines, 2011,p.70

If WAI were an art therapy based group then there would be an implicit acceptance that those attending were there for therapy - for the help that someone more 'together' could offer. The art works made would also suffer this perception – they would be just another way to expose, analyse and 'fix' the perceived deficiencies of the maker. Indeed, Brown (in Stickley, 2012) asserts that "the application of art as medicine – as therapy – formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" (p.24). This non-therapy, participatory arts based approach is one described through a range of key qualitative arts-based research projects in the field of mental health by Stickley (2012). From this perspective, art is seen as social action, as a political voice, with studios such as ours best described as places to meet and work alongside others who understand. They are places where our creativity is free and valued.

“Flipping Deficits”

The term ‘flipping deficits’ is one that has found its way into our WAI vocabulary, along with a range of other rather wry descriptors that we use together to identify who we are and what we do. We have been known to describe ourselves as ‘having artism’, and to depict the WAI way of working together as the ‘WAI infusion’. This humour disguises some very real and pathologising diagnoses, discourses, approaches, and understandings that have been offered to us outside of the WAI space.

The term flipping deficits is an important one as it describes the way that WAI challenge and respond to the many, many deficit representations and negative social responses made to us, as women who have experienced violence. Key to this term is the critical exposure that it brings to those things that continue to oppress us long after the violence has ended.

If we seek a different response, and to change things, then we must expose and re-dress the oppressive perspectives and practices that inhibit change. In order to flip something onto its back you must know it well enough to approach it carefully, and unfortunately we do, as we are often intimate with many of these very negative understandings. Flipping deficits has become a term that describes a complex practice of analysis, discussion, response through art making, and transformation (not necessarily in that order). It is not easy to expose ideologies which are embedded and seen as common sense, but which conceal layers of ongoing power and control (Hadley, 2013), but we attempt this because we have something to say – we want our voices heard and we want others to benefit.

Self-representation

Despite the action and activism of female artists, and the more open transmission of our stories through art and literature, the attitudes and stereotypes which remain around women who have experienced violence continue to impact on the power we have to represent ourselves. Sharing narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence.

Representing ourselves offers us the opportunity to transform the way we are seen and understood by those outside of our experiences, and to reclaim our bodies, our identities, our autonomy, and our dignity. The alternative to self-representation is often silence - because it offers us the autonomy to accept or refuse specific subject positionings inherent in the discourses of violence and representation. Not saying things can be a form of resistance, a way of protecting the safety of the personal experience which we ourselves own, and of refusing to engage in dialogue which continues to repress and marginalise us (Morgan and Coomes, 2001). If those who know abuse and oppression so intimately must take the subject position of silence then violence will continue.

To challenge these prescribed collective identities we must have the opportunity to call them into question and to offer our own alternatives (Dunn, 2005). Our authentic voices self-representing these experiences, our responses to them, and our identities, offer the best opportunity for change.

Practical concerns

The role of facilitator

As the WAI facilitator you will play a key role in liaising between the Agency and the collective, and in managing resources, funding and relationships. You will require some important qualities.

Ideal facilitator qualities:

- You are an insider to violence – you have lived it too
- You have a depth and breadth of art experience and/ or professional training
- You have previous experience curating exhibitions and fronting media
- You can facilitate manaakitanga
- You are honest, organised, and relate to a wide range of people
- You have energy, a sense of humour, and diplomacy
- You have a good analysis of the violence you experienced
- You can manage an often tight budget across a year, keep receipts and complete funders reports

What are you getting yourself into?

The WAI Palmerston North pilot model of practice is being tested to see if it works for other facilitators, Agencys, and women, in other regions. The goal is to end up with a model of practice that translates across difference. Your input and reflections, and your unique way of working is crucial to this process. The WAI collective you are involved in will be unique to you all, and that is important. It needs to work for all of those involved – so your feedback and reflections, criticism and different ways of working matter. I want to hear what works and what doesn't, and look forward to being inspired by you and your collective.

Here is a basic outline:

- You will facilitate a three – six hour art session once each week with the WAI collective
- You will organise resources, activities and outside tutors or studio use
- You will keep brief written reflections on the process, relationships and outcomes of your collective
- You will work alongside your participating Women's Agency, and keep them up to date with how things are going
- You will organise and curate exhibitions (at least once a year)
- You will manage funding (if requested to by the Agency), keep all receipts, and write reports for funders if required

What is in this for you?

It may sound like an awful lot of work, and some weeks and some times of the year it may take more than your normal session hours a week, but I have found the rewards far outweigh the effort (at least the majority of the time!). There are some definite benefits:

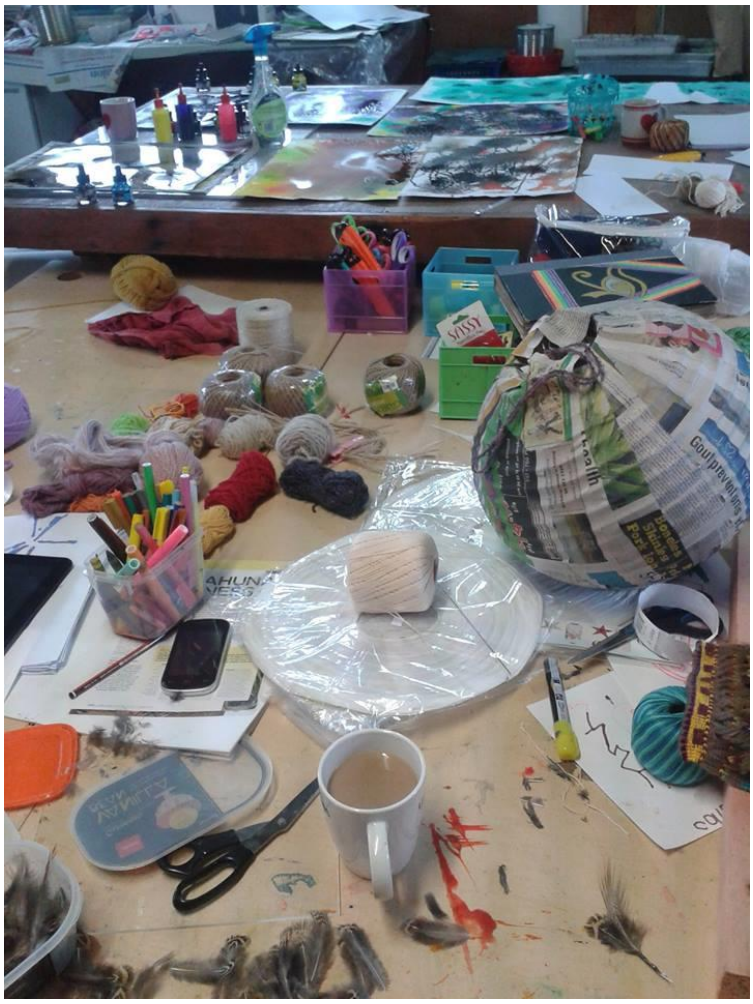
- But they probably don't include money sadly – funding is normally just given for resources and activities, although your supporting agency may want to pay you or offer a koha.
- You will have reasonable access to the WAI studio space and resources outside the collective hours (with negotiation – this will depend a lot on whether the space is shared with others)
- As a collective member you will have the right to make and exhibit work as part of WAI
- Friendship, understanding and belonging, as part of a collective who share a very specific kaupapa, and as part of the wider Agency and social agency dynamic

- Publicity – you will receive media attention for the work you undertake as a facilitator and a collective member

.

You may wish to participate in your Agency or agency's regular volunteer training, but please know that you are already doing your bit by facilitating WAI so you do not have to take shifts on the crisis line or rattle buckets – although you may be already doing this, or may be more than happy to participate. Should an opportunity arise for you to participate in Response Based Practice training then this would be immensely beneficial as WAI is grounded in RBP.

I have asked your agency to please take very good care of you – the chances are that you will be working as a volunteer to do this (eg: they are may not be able to pay you), and that you are pouring your heart and soul into both the relationships and art-making. It is a big commitment for you and you will need an ear some days. I will do my best to mentor and assist you also.



Finding a space

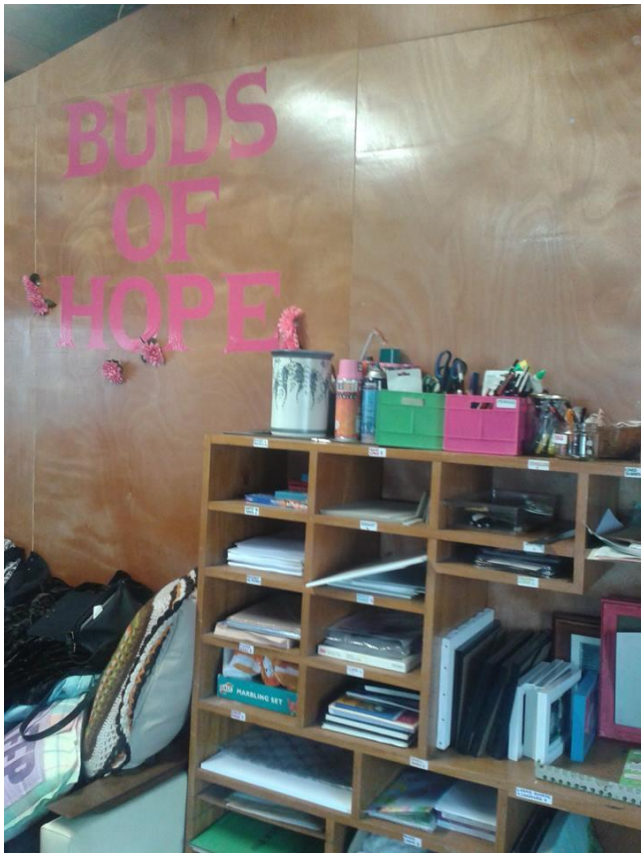
Please talk with your supporting agency about this as they may have a space in mind and your input is crucial as you are the one who knows what the space needs to be used for.

WAI need a space that is safe and that can belong to them alone if this is at all possible. If anyone can walk in on the art-making or chatting then the safety of the space will feel compromised. The women of WAI need to know that they will be the only people seeing their work, until such time as they decide to make it public through the exhibition process.

Offering a designated space can be tricky but is completely worth the effort – it doesn't need to be fancy or even big. WAI PN have previously used an old dental clinic, the back half of the PN Women's Agency donation shed – an outdoor double garage (which had a concrete floor, a tin roof and no insulation…and was freezing in winter and boiling in summer!), before we finally got our large current studio space. We adore our cramped, imperfect space (leaky windows, wobbly table and all), and everyone who visits comments on the way it feels – the energy is positive and protective. There are 42 collective members in WAI PN, although the most we ever have in is around 15 people at a time and yes it is chaos but we manage.

The space needs:

- Power and a sink with running water (cold is fine)
- Furniture and storage – we have tables, seats, and cupboards which were donated or we have had funding for.
- A kettle, cups and if possible a small fridge for milk – again from donations
- Art resources – a selection of paper, paint, brushes, inks, clay, thread, fabric etc
- Equipment- sewing machine, printmaking equipment etc – this is a bonus not a requirement



Participants will also need access to a toilet (but this doesn't need to be actually in the space).

If the space is handy to your supporting agency then that is even better, but anywhere central will do – our first WAI space was a tiny disused dental clinic that a school rented to us for $20 a week (including power), so think creatively and ask your contacts.

Use what comes in, ask around for donations, or put up specific requests onto your Facebook page, or on noticeboards in community libraries, art spaces etc

**If it is impossible to find a designated space then WAI will need plenty of good lockable storage and the assurance that others will not come into the space unless invited when they are working there.

Funding.

As a guide it costs PN WAI around $5000 a year just to pay our rent, $8000 would allow us to do so many other things that we are keen to try, but we just manage on a lot less if we use lots of recycled materials and don't pay for outside tutors or studio spaces. There are lots of art groups and tutors who will be happy to give their time for nothing, or a small art or food-based koha.

From 2018 you may apply for funding as part of your role, or the agency you walk alongside may do this for your collective. WAI is a standalone venture that relies on the supporting agency for advocacy and advice but not necessarily for funding – unless this has been the arrangement. Funders may require the agency to act as an umbrella organisation for any money granted. Support in applying will be given to you (along with examples of successful applications), and the agency should be involved with this process.

The supporting agency can hold the WAI funds themselves in a separate account and reimburse you for purchases, or give you access to this account. The facilitator may also hold the money in a separate account. How this is managed depends on what suits both you and your agency best.

Facilitators will be required to keep all receipts, and complete funding reports to those who have donated money, in a timely manner (examples of these will be given). Facilitators are responsible for all funds unless the agency chooses to take this responsibility on themselves.

A list of funding sources is included at the end of this guide

Resourcing

Basic resources and facilities that are required are listed above (in the section on space).

Any other resources are your responsibility as you know what you are trying to achieve and what the women in your collective require.

Some free sources are listed, but you will find many of your own.

Useful things from agency donations seem to come in all the time – ask your agency for the chance to trawl through their donation space - you will probably want things that other people don't! WAI PN take old board games, tatty blankets (to make into cushions), sheets and fabric to sew and print onto, bits and pieces to make jewellery from etc.. Donations may also be perfect for furnishing the WAI studio space.

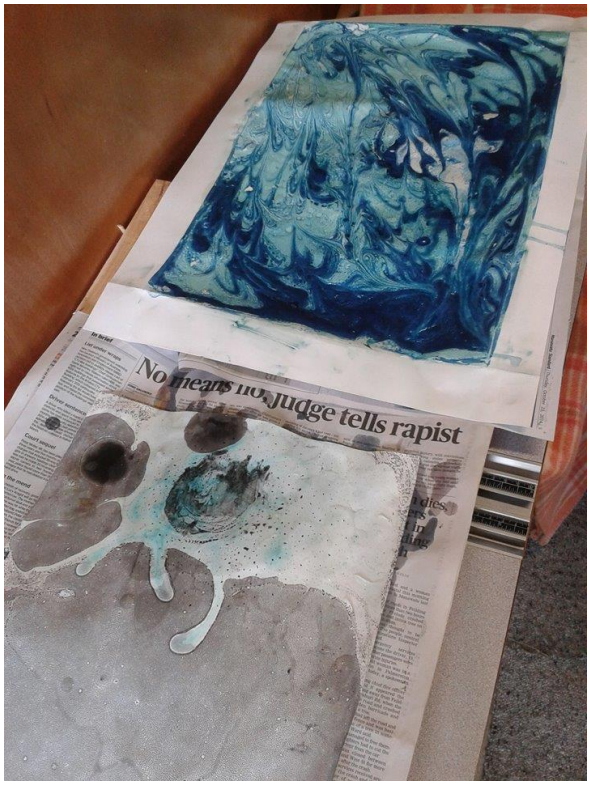
Criteria for participation in WAI

Each agency will select women to invite to WAI. It is a condition of the ethics approval for the WAI research that these women have completed, or are currently in, a DV education programme (or similar), and that they are safe. Information packs will be given and a signed acknowledgement of the conditions involved in participating are required as part of the participation in this research. I would suggest that women attend a few times before the research documents are given to them – the paperwork side of the research project can be intimidating especially if the context and other participants are also unfamiliar.

WAI PN have found, however, that women may not remain safe during their involvement with WAI. Should women's safety be compromised they will be referred back to Women's Agency for advocacy and advice, but they will not be excluded from WAI, unless there is a real risk to the safety of the

collective or individuals within it. Ongoing involvement in WAI may prove a very necessary support should circumstances change in this way.

Ongoing violence



As above, women will be welcome to remain involved in the collective should they experience violence during their involvement with WAI, providing safety is not compromised. In these circumstances it is expected that agency advocacy and support would increase, and that the WAI facilitator would remain in close contact with the agency, and the woman herself. Absences from WAI will need to be shared with Agency staff.

Agency staff are always welcome in the WAI space, and regular contact with the collective may make this advocacy a more natural part of the space, especially during times of higher need. Staff are welcome to come along and make work with the women also – so visits can be fun!

Packs from agencies for counselling and advocacy

All women attending WAI will be given support packs during their first collective hui. The packs will include contact details for support, counselling, and advocacy. These packs will be created with the advice and guidance of each involved agency. Extra packs will also be available in the space, so they can be taken again if lost, or for women visiting who are interested in participating in WAI.

Comments on others' work

WAI PN cover this with our kawa, but each WAI facilitator will need to set the tone around how comments are given and received, with their own collective. Upholding dignity is key.

Visitors

Agency staff are always welcome in the WAI space.

Agency volunteers are welcome by arrangement with the facilitator.

Outside artists and speakers, or those interested in WAI, may visit by arrangement also. Outside art tutors add an extra element to WAI, as do visits out to specialised studio spaces and galleries. Limiting these 'outsiders' to just one or two artists or groups that have a real respect and care for our kaupapa is best. All 'outsider' artists and tutors will be required to sign confidentiality forms.

All upcoming visits, times and the purpose of these visits (apart from those by Agency staff) need to be clearly communicated to WAI collective members well ahead of the time – at WAI the week before, or via text or Facebook message at least a day ahead. This allows members to opt out: leave, or not come in should they feel uncomfortable.

*It is expected that any visitors to the WAI space are informed and respectful of our kaupapa. PN WAI collective members become quite defensive if visitors see them as participating in art as therapy, or want to 'help' them - WAI are a collective of art-makers not a therapy based group.

The facilitator will ensure WAI visitors are kept to a minimum.

Attendance and membership

WAI operates once weekly in Palmerston North. Previously we have worked on two days a week, but I found this a really big commitment and would not recommend it.

Session lengths and the day of the week will be up to you. As a general guide 3 hours per session, per week, is long enough for new collectives starting the year. They can achieve a lot in this time, clean up and then hopefully have some head space before they collect children from daycare, kindy, or school, or head back to other activities. Starting out in a group which is about self-representing our narratives of violence can be tiring, until we know how this will work for us. Getting to know others and developing relationships also requires energy.

This is the time to go slow with the talking and ensure the wairua of the space develops through active art-making.

Once the collective starts to feel established and connected then the length of the sessions may be extended up to six hours, if you wish to do this. Longer sessions are really useful towards the end of the year when exhibition work starts being prepared.

Women may attend for as often and as long as they choose to. They have no obligation to attend. Life is busy and sometimes we don't feel like going anywhere, or sometimes women only want to call in for a cuppa and a chat, and don't choose to make work. I have become used to enjoying whoever turns up, however they turn up, and supporting whatever they feel like doing. As we work autonomously women can be doing different things at different times anyway, and once women have learnt skills they are usually happy to share these with those who were not there on that day – this is how the collective spirit develops. This may feel a bit chaotic but autonomy and the collective spirit are crucial to WAIs' success.

WAI is not a ‘class’ with a ‘teacher’, but a collective with a facilitator who is also a collective member (which means you will be making work too – as often as you can manage it).

Becoming a WAI collective member is not just a one year long privilege. As a collective our members can remain and continue to participate for as long as they like. WAI PN have almost all of our founding members still, although one or two have moved cities or no longer feel the need to come each week.

This ongoing membership can be problematic when resourcing. WAI PN have prioritised the resourcing of new members each year. A hui was held to discuss how we would ensure that new members have the same opportunities that existing members have had. WAI PN volunteered to bring their own resources, come for a shorter period each week or make more work at home and meet less often so that new members could enjoy the same benefits. To date we have not had to implement these suggestions as we have been able to manage funding carefully so all members can continue to fully participate. This will not be a problem for your WAI collective until 2017, at which time solutions can be sought together.

Transport

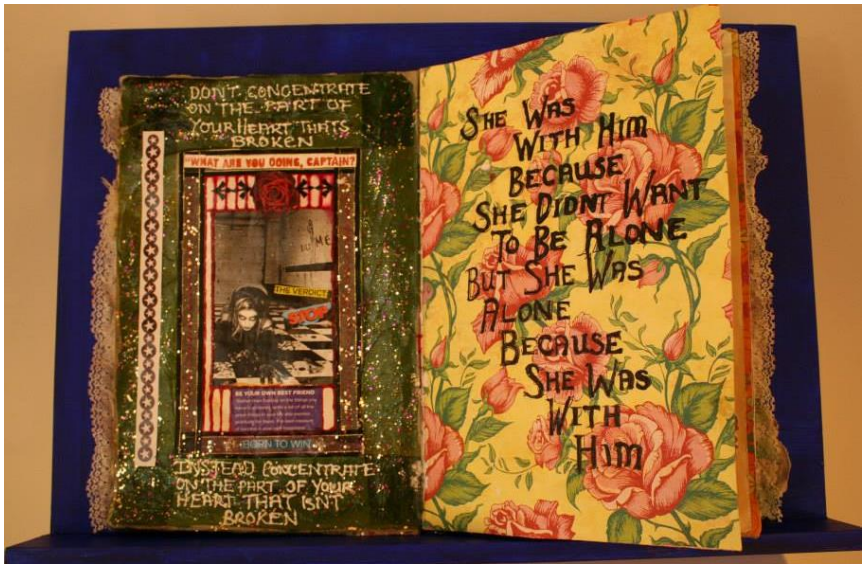
It may be necessary to offer transport to make WAI accessible to those who wish to participate.

WAI PN have managed transport in different ways. In our first year we paid a koha to our local ‘Street Van’ to pick up and drop off women to the weekly session. Since then women have largely made their own way to WAI, as we are now much closer to the central bus depot.

WAI PN do use the Agency Van for transport on occasion, or we carpool when we head out of Palmerston North to work in a printmaking studio in Feilding (20 minutes away) or a pottery studio in Marton (40 minutes away). When we are financially able to we offer a koha for this. We also hired a van for the day we came down to Wellington for the Domestic Violence Protest March in September 2014 – an expensive option but it meant we could all participate (masked for anonymity), and could visit galleries on the way back home – something which we all really enjoyed doing together.

I have also made the commitment to pick up and drop women from the Safe House when we have participants living there, as it is a long way from our studio, and sometimes just too tiring for women to organise themselves. You may not wish to do this – staff may be back and forwards far more often and may be able to help with transport. Women may also be happy to help each other out, once they trust each other.

The art-making approach



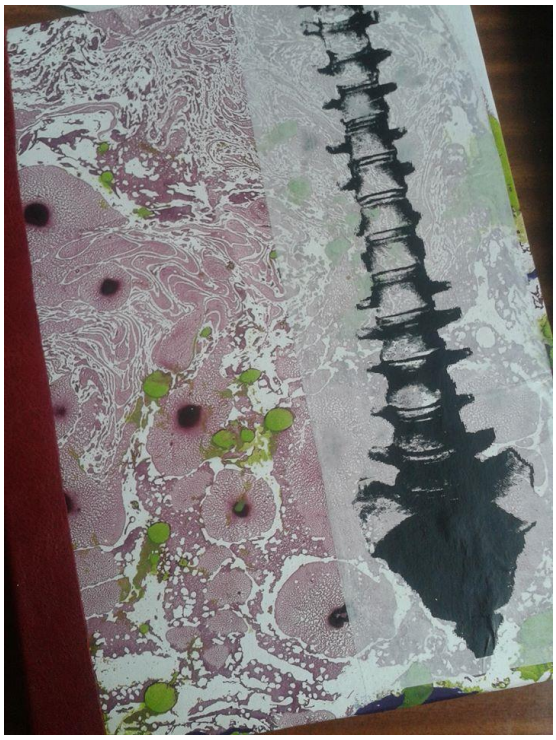
This is the responsibility of the facilitator, but it would be great if you can offer your agency a few insights now and then to help them understand what is going on in your WAI collective.

What you make is totally up to your collective and the skills you can bring to this process – use your contacts and the skills that sit within the collective also eg: at WAI PN one of our members is a prolific paper pulp artist and she has loved sharing her passion and skills with the rest of the collective.

Making art is what WAI is about. The kaupapa will be made clear at the time women are invited to participate, so we all know why we are there. Talking is not the purpose of this collective – merely a positive spin-off once people get to know and trust each other.

WAI is a making space, so it is vital that art making takes priority.

Starting the year

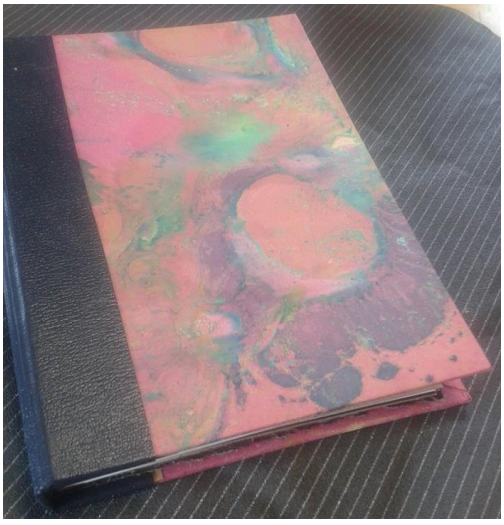


The art making around our experiences will come out as we feel safe to share it. It is vital that this is allowed to be expressed however women wish to represent it. For a start you may find that some women want to make work that appears to be not about their experiences at all, or they may want to create work that is strident and angry. The WAI kaupapa is about us – not our perpetrators. We are not usually the violent ones, although we may still be quite angry!

Every piece of work we make has us in it somehow, even if others can't see this.

I suggest that the first few art making experiences are non-threatening. WAI PN make books at the start of every year. In this way we learn new skills and create a private space that is ours for the year – which is really important as an individual within a collective. Moving into a more conceptual space takes time and safety, but it seems to occur quite easily within WAI, if we start out slowly.

There are lots of different techniques for making books – and some great videos on You Tube. I am happy to meet with you as part of our new collective set up process to show you a couple of the ways that WAI PN have found to make books easily, and can share our contacts for the specific resources you may need. Book making has proven such a popular skill that many women in our collective just keep making them all year, and several of us rely heavily on drawing and thinking through these visual diaries. They are also a great place to record technical procedures for later reference.



Our first art making (the ice-breaker) is usually the inking or marbling of our book covers – something that is lots of fun and immediately engages women in conversation with each other, as they discuss colours and how they have achieved various effects.

The rest of the year

The first WAI year is a good time to share whatever skills the collective have or would like to learn. It might be good to have a few ideas to go on with in the first few weeks of every year. WAI PN have used our first part of each year (after our bookmaking) to work using printmaking as this is a great way to ensure results that look like 'real' art – no matter what level of skill the collective have. It is necessary to work together to create and lift prints – this allows women to engage with each other and the kaupapa quite naturally.

In 2013 we printed tea towels which we exhibited at our city library. In 2014 we created printed blanket cushions which we also exhibited at several of the city libraries in Palmerston North. Both exhibitions were simple and easy to install – hanging tea towels and putting cushions on chairs! Going straight into a smaller exhibition early each year has worked well for us as it has taken the scary prospect of exhibition and thrown us into this in a smaller, less intimidating, way. Both exhibitions have been on at the same time as annual appeal for Women's Refuge – July each year, which ensures relevance and offers a way in to venues.

WAI PN have found that having time to learn new skills, and to play with these is really important. We have enjoyed playing with the boundaries of 'good art' also. For example: poor quality prints (ink too thick, uneven printing etc) have been seen as reflective of how we are seen as women who have experienced violence – worthless, broken etc. One of our collective members screwed up her 'bad'

print, then wet it inked it and carefully recreated it, spreading it out and gluing the pieces back together. It became the first print in a series which showed her growth in strength and understanding, as each print became clearer, of better quality, and more empowered (see the Bambi prints below).

Playing and having fun have been a huge part of our process of discovery and creation.

While autonomy is crucial to WAI having boundaries or guidelines around our final artworks has become important also. Many women have found the looseness of complete freedom intimidating and feel unsure of the expectations. Talking about general ideas often leads to specific things that WAI can work on autonomously yet still together: eg: WAI PN created a paper cutting wall for our 2015 exhibition. The guidelines were that the works be white, framed (size, colour and quantity of frames are up to the individual within a 1.5 metre square each) and that there will be some flowers in there somewhere to tie to our show title *Bloom*. Ideas around printing white ink on white paper using letterpress text were offered, and examples of good quality paper cutting shown, but each woman had her own unique kaupapa that she brought to the creation of her works.

Regular hui about what the collective want to try and ideas for the end of the year will develop naturally. Women work autonomously at WAI, within reason. This is important (if chaotic) as it allows us to choose how we want to do things – it may just be autonomy within a process (etching instead of using letterpress) or it may mean 10 people working on different things within the studio space! Themes seem to develop naturally and people bounce off each other's' ideas, techniques, and media use.

Enjoy the chaos!

Exhibition

Again, this is your responsibility, but you may need help from agency staff to move, label and hang / take down work.

Preparing for exhibition

- Find and book an exhibition space early in the year so that you can plan the type of work and the space you have to show it in as you go during the year. Think creatively – anywhere will do and people know people who have odd spaces available really cheaply or at a negligible cost. You may have contacts who can offer exhibition space to your collective, or who can promote this through the media – please talk to your agency and collective so this can be worked through together. WAI PN show in our local Community Art Centre – because it is handy and cheap and allows the work to be shown professionally, but we have also shown in atriums and public libraries – the type of work we do needs to be seen by everyday people.

- Develop a theme or kaupapa based on what already seems to be happening – this will require a collective hui (meeting) so everyone can participate in the decision making process.

- Ensure that there is adequate time for works to be professionally presented, framed and or mounted (Warehouse frames tidy up fine with some extra glue and spray paint!)

- Order professional stick on signage (as seen above for our WAI PN 2014 exhibition)

- You may need to let women in the collective know that not all work will be shown. It helps to say that you will have an outsider come in and help select the best works for the space (this takes the pressure off you while still allowing you to be selective). I always ensure that there is a ‘fair’ showing of women’s work – so that everyone in the collective has their best / most important or meaningful pieces exhibited.

- Collect information on titles, media and the pseudonym that each woman would like to use.

- Prepare the title labels (examples as below) and mount on 3-4mm foam board cut to size or up to 5mm wider than the title. Use blutak to adhere below the bottom right hand corner of each work, in line with the edge of the piece.

Home is....

Diptych, Glazed Ceramic

C.J. Mahe

Reflections

Watercolour and copper foil on paper

Anonymous

- Prepare a written statement on WAI and the works shown – it needs to be short but share our WAI kaupapa (an example is shown below) and also be backed onto foam board with a 5mm border. Keeping your cuts straight ensures a professional finish.

WAI – the Women's Art Initiative

The Women's Art Initiative are a collective of women making art in response to our experiences of violence. We are mothers, partners, teachers, artists, journalists, retail managers, social sector advocates, students and counsellors – just everyday women getting on with our lives – which makes sense when the statistics show that one in three New Zealand women will be affected by Intimate Partner Violence at some point in their lives. Around 25 women a year will lose their lives to domestic violence in New Zealand and Police statistics show that only around 18% of this violence is even reported.

WAI are women who are considered to be the 'survivors' of this violence. We are those whose voices and stories are not heard – we are seen as too ashamed, broken, or vulnerable to represent these experiences for ourselves. We are spoken, to, for, and about but we are rarely asked to speak for ourselves.

Art offers us a way of self-representing our experiences and challenging the myths, excuses, and stereotypes that sit around this violence and who we are as 'survivors'. Our artwork and the shared process of making this in our studio acknowledges our dignity, empowerment, and our resistance to the violence we have experienced. The WAI collective supports us to share our narratives safely with others who understand.

WAI can mean water in Maori – an essence that purifies and cleanses.

Hanging the Exhibition

As WAI work anonymously for safety this means that collective members cannot participate in any way in the exhibition curatorial process in a public venue.

Currently each WAI collective will exhibit separately. It is hoped that down the track the wider WAI network can hold national exhibitions, showcasing a selection of our most thought-provoking works.

You may need help to curate and hang the works. Some venues will offer assistance, but if you don't have help anyone with carpentry, measuring, or curatorial skills will be able to help with the technical aspects - and call in friends, family and Agency whanau if you need help painting plinths, patching walls or moving things between the venue and the studio.

The Opening Event

How this runs (or if there even is one) will be completely up to your collective – discuss and see how everyone wants this to work. Each collective will decide how they want to approach their opening. WAI PN have a special time after the work is installed when we meet to view the exhibition together alone, before the public opening. This way we have all seen the work installed and can discuss why different curatorial choices have been made. While you are a collective member you are also the one with (more than likely) the most experience and skill when it comes to curating a show, so this can be a good chance to allow members to learn from you about curation processes.

As a guide:

WAI PN normally ask the Women's Agency CEO to attend and open our event. We also invite anyone who is involved to speak – this may be your own Agency Manager, your sponsors or funders, or others who have supported your collective.

As the facilitator and public face of WAI, I always speak on behalf of the collective (asking them what they want said) and for myself. Please remember to acknowledge your funders at this time.

At WAI PN kai is served after the speeches (and kept covered while speaking happens). You may need help preparing and setting up the kai for the opening – see how the collective want to approach this.

*WAI exhibition openings to date have not involved alcohol, as this seems inappropriate given our kaupapa.

Some notes

WAI collective members have the right to opt out of exhibiting their work – however they may still continue to participate in the making process. Separate permission will be requested for the exhibition.

Each woman owns her own work and all copyrights to this. All artwork will be taken home at the end of each year.

Why does Exhibiting work matter?

Presenting the WAI collectives' art work professionally in a public venue ensures that we have a forum for our experiences and offers the best possible chance for this self-representation to privilege and validate our voices and our artwork; offering education, challenging misconception and misrepresentation, and opening a space for others to tell their own stories.

For many women the exhibition is a huge deal – putting out not only their art work but their personal experience is incredibly daunting, but can be really empowering. Seeing our narratives respected through professional presentation is really important – it makes what we are saying important and credible.

For WAI PN exhibition is often an emotional time – we feel pride, fear, and connection to 'others', and we see the impact our narratives have on our families and our viewers.

Please offer your collective extra support at this time.

Media

It is important women know that work shown through the exhibition process will be seen by the public (who may include previous partners). It may also be reproduced visually in the media. Women can use a pseudonym or remain anonymous on their titles. Self-portraits are not recommended, except under consultation with the Agency.

Publicity is great for the Agency and the WAI collective – if it is accurate. I am extremely controlling with media and always assert our kaupapa both verbally and in writing – the last thing WAI need when they have worked as makers all year is to be portrayed as 'victims' or 'survivors' of violence who are 'doing art as therapy' to make themselves feel better! We are art makers self-representing our experiences. I prefer the term 'women who have experienced violence' to 'victim' or 'survivor', although as these are commonly understood terms I do use them (always in inverted commas). Violence is only part of our wider experience and identity, not the sum total of who we are. Our art work privileges our authentic experience over the stereotypes and myths that marginalise and discriminate against us.

You and your Agency may wish to prepare a written statement about your WAI collective and their exhibition work which can be given to media representatives. That way we are all on the same page.

The way those outside our experience portray us is a huge reason for us speaking for ourselves. The last thing we want is for publicity to place us neatly back in the boxes that we are deconstructing through the WAI collective process.

Communication

Clear and regular communication is key to holding the collective together. Our two main forms of communication are text message and a shared secret Facebook page. Communication between the different facilitators, and between the Agencys and their facilitators may be less frequent and probably achieved through visits, phone calls, emails, or hui.

Cellphone

WAI PN all have my cell phone number and I have each of theirs. The women choose who else in the collective that they want to have their phone numbers – if anyone – and arrange this themselves. They are asked not to share these numbers with anyone outside of the group unless they are given permission to do so.

Every Sunday night I text the times the studio is open, and the resources available to the collective on the Monday. Sometimes this is a reminder that we are going to work elsewhere and of the time we will leave and return. Collective members can also text to remind me if they needed specific equipment, a ride, or won't be coming.

WAI online

Photos of collective members may not be taken or posted anywhere online.

Our PN WAI secret Facebook page is a busy place, with members posting constantly – not just art related things but motivational quotes, exhibition openings, or things that they think other members may appreciate. It has become a great way for us to remain in contact and develop our relationships outside of our kanohi ki kanohi (face to face) time.

Your WAI collective can set up their own secret group on Facebook, with you, or a Agency staff member as their administrator. It will be a page that only the administrator can invite people to join. Agency managers or an allocated staff member are encouraged to participate so that they can keep an eye on the content, and join in the inspiration also. This is a great place to add art techniques and videos of how to do things from YouTube, or images of inspiring works similar to what we are trying to achieve in our mahi.

Our public Facebook page is a great place to share our public work, and our studio process work. The WAI public Facebook page is a community page which will be for ALL of our WAI Facilitators to add their collectives' work to. Facilitators will be added as administrators to this WAI Aotearoa wider collective page. This is not a page for other collective members to add to as it is a public space.

Down the track I am keen to develop a 'WAI online' art-making collective – to allow women who cannot (or are unwilling) to participate in the kanohi ki kanohi model to make art and be part of a community of makers who have all experienced violence, from home. It would be great to have these online communities attached to Agencys, facilitators, and working WAI collectives, so that they can be included in the Facebook pages and, if they want to, their work can still be shown in exhibitions. Developing these relationships may open the door for women to step into the kanohi ki kanohi model down the track.

Children

While children are always welcome at the PN WAI collective, they are not encouraged. Often WAI is the only space women have where they can focus on themselves and their art-making, and this is difficult if they are worried about children touching things or are bothered by their noise and movement.

Safety is also a concern when children are in the studio space. WAI PN have kerosene, toxic printmaking gels, turps, and broken plates, mirrors and glass.

I have developed a relationship with a church run childcare in Palmerston North. This centre supports women with advice and practical help filling in forms and dealing with WINZ, so that children can be somewhere safe while their parent / caregiver is at WAI. This works wells for some women.

WAI PN have managed children in the studio through our kawa, and by setting up a children's art / play area so that we can contain their movements and their making and ensure they are not using our good materials and paper accidentally. In our collective children are welcome as long as their parent/caregiver actively supervises them – which usually means that this person gets no making done themselves. Some days women are happy to just come for a chat and a coffee when they have their kids with them. If school holidays make this difficult then the WAI studio can close over this time, or it could take a different approach and focus entirely on a shorter art sessions that are for the children more than the adults. We are keen to encourage art across all ages, however the focus and the funding for WAI is the women involved.

What do I need to do as the facilitator of a WAI collective?

A Summary

This makes it sound simple and hopefully it will be, but if it isn't then please make contact with me. As the overall facilitator I am responsible to mentor and guide everyone in this process – we are all learning as we go, so glitches are expected!

- Commit to WAI carefully
- Help find a suitable studio space
- Ask Agency for furniture and resource donations
- Set up the studio and buy in resources
- Facilitate the weekly collective meeting
- Access funding as required
- Plan, curate and hang Exhibitions
- Seek advocacy and advice from Agency as required
- Monitor the budget and save all receipts
- Remember to read and re-read this guide – it is intended to help you
  (but - please scribble in notes and add things so we can make this model work for everyone)

Please stay in touch. It matters to me that supporting this WAI collective is positive and beneficial for everyone involved. It should be something that energises and nurtures you too. Hopefully any effort required to support your collective will be returned ten-fold in positive energy, friendship, and amazing artwork.

Again – thank you for what you are about to undertake and may the journey be worth it.

WAI Overall Facilitator and Researcher Information

Karen Seccombe

(previously McIntyre)

(MMVA, BFA, BEd)

My role in WAI is that of both founder and overall facilitator. I also facilitate the WAI Palmerston North collective.

WAI started as a direct response to the 13 years of violence that I experienced, and to my ongoing discomfort around how I am portrayed because of this experience. Art-making has been a crucial way of self-representing this.

WAI was developed as part of my Master of Maori Visual Arts degree, through Te Putahi-a-Toi, Massey University. It continues as part of my PhD research, supervised by artist and Massey Professor Bob Jahnke, and Dr. Margaret Forster. WAI will eventually function as a stand-alone venture.

The purpose of this research is to establish variations and problems when implementing the WAI model of practice in other regions, run by other facilitators, alongside other Agencys. The goal is to establish a working model of practice which can be offered to social service agencies responding to women's experiences of violence. This model of practice prioritises these women's voices within the discourse of violence.

The WAI collective approach to art-making, as women who have experienced violence, challenges conventions which silence women, and which view 'community art' as somehow less than that of the individual 'artist as genius'.

Arts funding and useful contacts

Funding

www.the**arts**.co.**nz**/boosted

BOOSTED is a crowd funding website suitable for one off funding for specific projects, with a lower limit – they suggest around $500. WAI PN have used BOOSTED to fund a $300 pottery wheel. This site largely relies on your network and contacts to donate to the project. The fundraiser (you) has control of the content of the page and is well supported by the BOOSTED facilitators.

http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/find-funding/funds/arts-grant

http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/find-funding/funds/creative-communities-scheme

Creative New Zealand are the largest arts project funder in New Zealand. There are a range of funding opportunities available – check the criteria and amount funded carefully as successful application to one of these schemes usually means you can't apply to another.

http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/

Local authorities manage the Creative Communities Scheme and may also know of other funding opportunities in your area.

http://www.mch.govt.nz/funding-nz-culture/search-funding

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage fund offer a search function that allows the user to put in their criteria (what the money is for, group/ individual, the region etc..). Offering a wide range of local grants this is an option worth spending some time investigating.

https://www.perpetualguardian.co.nz/philanthropy/applying-for-funding

Also offers a range of funding opportunities to registered charitable organisations – so this would need to be completed by the Agency, not the WAI facilitator

http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/Funding-and-grants---Lottery-grants---Lottery-Community

http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/Funding-and-grants---Trust-and-fellowship-grants

Regional grants available

http://generosity.org.nz/

This site requires payment

http://grants.nzct.org.nz/

This site requires the creation of a user profile

There are many places to find funding – keep an eye out for one-off or less frequent funding opportunities or funding for designated projects. It is easy to pitch what you want to do with WAI to utilise the criteria offered – eg: dependent on the criteria you may need to request funding for a one-off exhibition within a specific timeframe, or the criteria may require your WAI collective to collaborate with another community or arts organisation, or have a specific outcome such as an installation. As facilitator you will hopefully understand the art-speak and be able to access funding accordingly.

The other thing to remember is that the collective can make money themselves. WAI PN have been printing and making cushions from old donated woolen blankets. While it didn't make us our fortune we also didn't promote it much, or hit the markets or shops. There may be an opportunity for your collective to maintain a section in a shop, café or outlet supplying an arts product that they develop and enjoy making.

As a wider collective these opportunities will be explored also.

Resources

www.ordermax.co.nz/**Art-Supplies**

www.warehousestationery.co.nz/**art**

www.gordonharris.co.nz/

www.impressionsnelson.co.nz/fine-**art-supplies**.htm

www.encaustic**art**.co.nz

https://www.tanjis.co.nz/

www.**montmarte**.net/stockist

artpaper@ihug.co.nz
Randal (the owner) supplies a wide range good quality paper for all art processes and book card

WAI PN also use Spotlight, Uncle Bills (good cheap paint, brushes, sponges, plaster bandage, gold foil, pins, needles…the list is endless), Mitre 10 and Bunnings (for wood, spray paint, plaster, black plastic, tools etc..) and buy cheap frames for exhibition from The Warehouse or garage sales (we usually have to re-glue these, and often spray paint them to a colour we like), and order our clay online (there are several suppliers depending on the type of clay required).

Free suppliers – it helps to make friends with people in your community

- Menzshed assist with community woodworking projects
- You could place an ad for the resources you need at your local library (WAI PN were given a sewing machine this way)
- Ask larger suppliers if they will discount or if they have any out of date stock you could have
- Paint stores may have mis-tints they will donate
- Looks for ‘arts recycling’stores
- Your local recycling centre
- Businesses that have excess polystyrene, broken glass and tiles, packaging and paper
- Tradespeople often have bits of wood, off cuts, old tools etc that they may donate
- Op shops – great places for fabrics, frames, jars, old music – the Salvation Army are the cheapest here in Palmerston North, shop around for the best prices

Art Spaces

Here are just a few spaces and contacts in the Wellington and Blenheim regions. You will have many more of your own contacts.

http://artsaccess.org.nz/wellington-creative-spaces-network

This network includes creative spaces in the Greater Wellington region and meets every six weeks to share resources, information and ideas. Members include Mix and Arts on High (Lower Hutt); Vincents Art Workshop, Pablos Art Studios and Alpha Art Studios (Wellington city); and King Street Artworks (Masterton). Arts Access Aotearoa co-ordinates the network. If you are interested in finding more about this network, contact Claire Noble at Arts Access Aotearoa T: 04 802 4349 or Email:claire.noble@artsaccess.org.nz

http://www.artistsalliance.org.nz/html/artist_spaces.php

Working for visual artists – careers, networks, advocacy – offers links to many other sites

http://www.tlc.ac.nz/

Learning Institution in the Wellington region – could be worth contacting re: one-off special classes in a specific media (eg: metal), or to enquire about using their facilities out of hours. Their tutors may also be interested in coming into the WAI space to work with women around a specific topic or media.

www.marlborough**artsociety**.com

May have tutors for one off visits, or be able to offer gallery space for exhibitions

204 High Street
P.O.Box 1136
Blenheim
Marlborough

Telephone : 03 577 6784

Email : info@marlboroughartsociety.com

Important Readings

These are attached at the end of this document. Please take the time to read them and ask any questions you have. These readings explain the underpinnings of WAI, so are good to understand well, especially as you will probably be asked to explain the kaupapa sometimes.

WAI kai

Kai is an important part of WAI. We like food that tastes good and happily some of it is even healthy! We hope to share your collectives' recipes as you develop them.

On shorter sessions we share morning tea, but on full days lunch is provided and should be included in your budget. Tea, coffee, milk etc are always available. I enjoy cooking for WAI PN, but you may prefer to buy in kai instead. The way you bring in manaakitanga through your kai will be unique to your initiative. A spirit of generosity sits in the WAI kai space.

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Appendix C

WAI – THE WOMEN'S ART INITIATIVE

Art making as resistance and response to Violence

Information package for Participating Agencies

Contents

The Women's Art Initiative WAI

You have received this guide because you have chosen to support a WAI collective. As I know how busy agencies responding to violence always are your involvement will be kept to a minimum – and it is clearly outlined in this document.

This guide is a working document and a draft. Please scribble notes on it, identify gaps and questions and I will ensure that these points are covered clearly in the final document. Your input is crucial to the success of the ongoing success of the WAI model of practice.

I will maintain regular contact with you, your WAI facilitator, and your WAI collective. I look forward to getting to know everyone through this process, and will offer as much help as I am able to.

Thank you for having the enthusiasm and foresight to participate in this opportunity to support the social justice work of WAI the Women's Art Initiative. I hope that everyone involved will enjoy the positive energy and public acknowledgement that comes from art-making within this collective.

In the spirit of WAI

Karen Seccombe (McIntyre)

Phone 0273422448 or email studio_kimbolton@outlook.com

Why (WAI) art?

What happens to women who have experienced violence once they leave the safe bubble of support services?

Walking away from the advocacy, the safe house, the education programme, and many of those who have supported us through the 'crisis' is generally positive – it may mean we are heading into a safer space. Society expects us then to get on with our lives as 'survivors', and put this traumatic time behind us. But we walk back into a world where our experiences of violence marginalise us. We sit uncomfortably within a society which ignores, minimises, and excuses what has happened to us. Our private realities will not match the public perception of us as "vulnerable victims" or "brave survivors" of violence. Our resistance to this violence will be hidden, minimised, unacknowledged, and ignored. We will rarely have the chance to represent our own stories because experts and spokespeople will speak on our behalf. We will be seen as too ashamed or damaged to speak for ourselves. This is our reality.

How do we challenge these stereotypes and assert ourselves as whole, well, people when our identities have so often been defined by the media, police, medical practitioners, psychologists, those 'helping' us, our ex-partners, our families, and people outside our lived experiences?

Sharing these narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. Research backs this: Jones (in Hogan, 2012) discusses the difficulty for women sharing their narratives of abuse with friends and family or wider society and acknowledges the unbearable weight of pain and disgust these narratives may cause others. The difficulty of voicing experiences of violence is also acknowledged by Jury (2009) and Walton (2010).

The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence. The language which sits around this violence holds such an emotionally meaningless weight that it fails miserably in capturing our lived realities. For example: the word "rape" can never portray the reality of being raped.

How can women speak of these unspeakable acts of violence in a way that is socially sanctioned outside of the safety of women's support groups or some therapeutic interventions? If they cannot share these core experiences with 'outsiders' then how can women feel connected and empowered, or even contextualise them? Our avenue becomes silence. If you don't talk then you are not judged.

Art making (as opposed to art therapy) offers an opportunity to self-represent these experiences without the need for words. Art making about our experiences allows us the autonomy of speaking for ourselves, showing our experiences from our perspective, in a way that does not further disempower or pathologise us. Art making as a collective, where we can remain anonymous if we choose to, holds even more power. The solidarity experienced in making art together is viewed by Levine and Levine (2011) as essential to the restoration of kinship and the sense of being part of a living community; "the arts are also capable of holding the experience of mourning what an individual or group has lost. "Mourning and celebration are two essential ways in which art-making can touch the essence of being human. Both our tears and our laughter can hold us together" (p.29). If this solidarity is with others who know violence then there is no careful tip-toeing around – we can speak openly and understand readily.

The potential for social change inherent in the power of image making offers not only a mediation between individuals and collectives but also between "cultural, universal, transpersonal and personal meanings" (Jones, 2012, p.48) - it may demand responses to injustice. In this way art becomes not only a voice for us, but a social action – a way of creating change, challenging the stereotypes and myths that sit around who we are and what the lived reality of this violence was like. It is an opportunity rarely afforded us.

WAI is that opportunity.

The WAI kaupapa and kawa

Our WAI kaupapa recognises the history of oppression, colonisation, and patriarchal power in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and acknowledges the ongoing, shifting nature of these discourses. We challenge misinformation and misrepresentation, and the authority of others over our realities.

WAI focuses on creating an environment where women are safe and have autonomy. They are safe to share their experiences through art making, safe to talk or not talk, safe because everyone in this environment has experienced violence. Making art together places the focus on our creativity - not our vulnerability, our brokenness, or our resilience. WAI upholds our dignity through the ongoing acknowledgement of our resistance to this violence (a Response Based Practice approach) and an ethic of care or manaakitanga. Our art work is about us – our experiences, our responses to these, our identities, relationships, and our desire to see social change. To date the artworks produced by WAI overwhelmingly demonstrate our strength, our resistance, and our empowerment. They also share the darkness of this violence, but in a way that has surprised and moved viewers, because of its colour and positivity.

WAI is insider facilitated – it is not an art ‘class’ with a ‘teacher’, as this would create a power dynamic that would preclude collectivism. While the facilitator takes responsibility she is also a member of the collective – it is a difficult role, balancing responsibility with membership.

The WAI kaupapa is based around participatory art making – not art therapy. To offer art as therapy would suggest that there was a brokenness that someone more whole could heal.

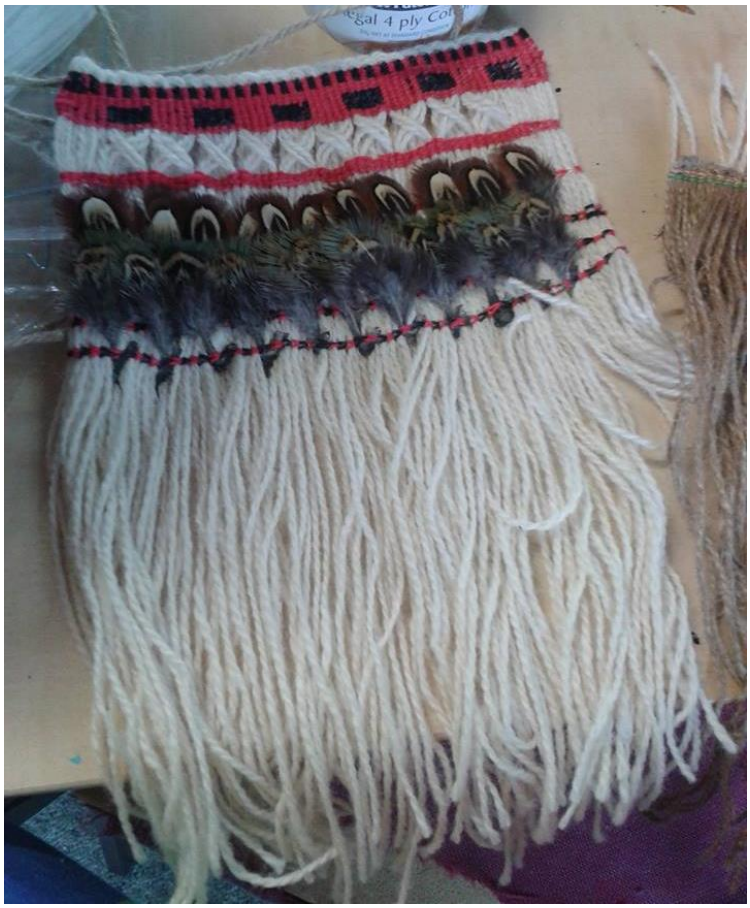
A body of literature sits around this concept of participatory art-making within the mental health sector (Brown, 2015; McKeown, Hogarth, Jones et al, 2012; Niadoo, 2005; Parr, 2007 & 2012, Spandler, Secker, Kent, Hacking and Shenton, 2007, 2008 & 2012, Stickley, 2010). The preconceptions around many people viewed as 'patients' led Brown (2012) to conclude that art as medicine or therapy "formalised and diminished art just as much as the codices of mental illness, adding seemingly impermeable layers of labelling and disempowerment" (as cited in Stickley, 2012, p. 62) upon those who were already stereotyped and marginalised.

Parr (2012) acknowledges the crucial importance of community art-making outside of the clinical setting and interpretation of therapeutic approaches. This understanding is also corroborated in relation to the 'victims' of violence by Jury (2009, p.60) who states that "social change arguably lies outside the scope of any therapeutic or supportive relationship". If participatory, community art making dignifies and empowers those who are described as 'mental health patients' then why can it not offer those same benefits to women who have experienced violence?

The WAI research and facilitation are underpinned and guided by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's 1999 ethical research principles. They are crucial to the development of our relationships.

The principles are:

1. *Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people)*
2. *Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face)*
3. *Titiro, whakarongo…korero (look, listen…speak)*
4. *Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)*
5. *Kia tupato (be cautious)*
6. *Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)*
7. *Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)*



Palmerston North WAI have also developed kawa, or ways of being, together over the past 3 years. Our kawa guide our relationships and our use of the space, and respond directly to our kaupapa. Every WAI collective will develop their own kawa, so these are included as a guide only.

WAI PN KAWA

We respond to our kaupapa:

- *We acknowledge our resistance to violence and uphold the dignity of everyone in WAI*
- *Our work challenges the myths and stereotypes that marginalise and stereotype women who have experienced violence*
- *We are aware of safety – we keep <u>all</u> information about others, their work, and our WAI space private and we do not take photographs of people (or their work unless we ask first)*
- *We don't have to talk about anything unless we want to – WAI is a making space*

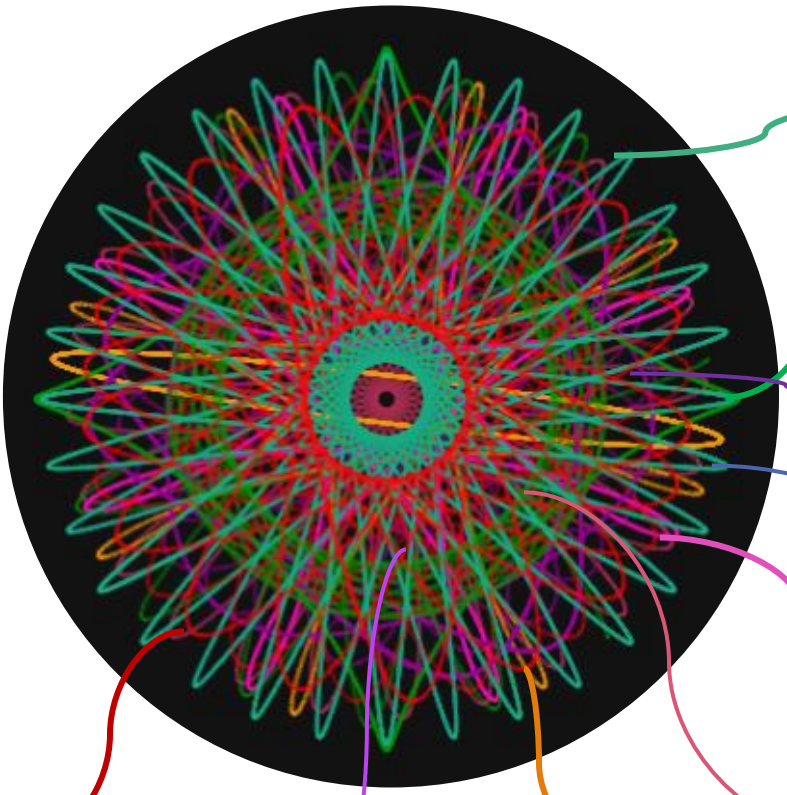
We respond to each other:

- *We acknowledge and respect the different physical and emotional spaces that people require to be creative in*
- *We accept collective members however they choose to come to WAI*
- *We talk sensitively and positively about others' art work*
- *We supervise our own children closely if we have to bring them, and we take them home if they disrupt the working energy of the collective*
- *We talk respectfully about any concerns at our hui – we uphold the dignity of everyone involved*

We are aware of our resources:

- *We clean up our own working space including the floor/ paintbrushes/ offcuts*
- *We put things back in their places when we have finished with them*
- *We use our 'fair share' of resources*
- *We only borrow from the 'Borrowing box' and we return what we borrow*

What does the WAI pilot model of practice look like?



Collective Art Making

Insider facilitation

Manaakitanga

Being

Self-representation

"Flipping Deficits"

Anti-Oppressive, Social Justice

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 1999 Ethical Research Principles

Response Based Practice

What is Response Based Practice?

Response Based Practice (RBP) is a way of thinking about violence developed by Alan Wade, Linda Coates, and Cathy Richardson. RBP underpins our WAI kaupapa. More information is included at the end of this guide.

Response Based Practice focuses on four key areas.

1. The way that Language is used to:

Hide or reveal violence

Hide or reveal victim responses and resistance

Confuse or make clear the perpetrator's responsibility

Blame and pathologise, or challenge the blaming and pathologising, of victims

2. Social Responses not Effects

Effects based ideas are that 'victims' "ask for it" or are attracted to the violence because of psychological problems or their history. The perpetrator and 'victim' are believed to be passive, and the problem is seen to be in the 'victims' head.

Response based ideas are that 'victims' of violence prefer to be treated with respect and kindness. Both the victim and the perpetrator are active and make decisions. The violence exists in the social world, in a context, and between people. Understanding both the negative and positive social responses to 'victims', and also 'victims' responses to these social responses is key. Language, Social interaction and social context all feed into this understanding.

3. Acknowledging Resistance to violence

Whenever people are treated badly, they always resist. People tend not to notice that victims resist violence. Perpetrators of violence know that victims will resist so they make plans to stop the victim from resisting. Violent and abusive behaviour is done deliberately

Acknowledging our resistance, however subtle, acknowledges and upholds our dignity. Resistance may be very small, and sometimes may take place only within the safety of the mind, but it is always present.

4. Upholding Dignity

Dignity is related to social esteem, mana, self-worth, self-determination, inclusion, respect, manaakitanga (an ethic of care), and mental and physical wellbeing.

(Richardson & Wade, 2013).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 1999 Ethical Research Principles and Manaakitanga

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, p. 120) Kaupapa Māori ethical research principles (outlined above) guide the relationship and community approach to the WAI project. They offer dignity in this space.

These principles also offer a respectful way in to the concept of Manaakitanga –an ethic of care. The WAI model of practice relies heavily on manaakitanga – it sits around and beneath everything we do. For WAI PN this 'ethic of care' involves starting every session with a coffee as we get into our artmaking. The jug goes on and off all day and we eat well. Manaakitanga comes from all sorts of places too – it is not just the facilitators' role – all collective members practice this respectful care of others and our environment. Our kawa acknowledges this.

At WAI we focus on our kaupapa and kawa as a way of upholding the dignity and caring for those involved. Our emphasis on our proficiency (not our deficiencies) and on presenting ourselves in an affirming, professional way publicly also focus the collective on dignifying ways of working together. Shifting our language also shifts the focus from the effects that the violence has had on us to the responses we have had to it – this acknowledges our resistance.

As we are all different it matters that we respect other people's experiences and responses, even if we don't always agree with the way they may frame these. WAI is not a place for competing with, or demeaning other people's realities, but it is a place where oppressive framing and stereotypes are challenged. At WAI our knowledge matters and our responses through art matter. Not just to us but to all of those whose lives we touch through our exhibitions and the publicity around our collective.

The WAI 'infusion' (as one collective member puts it) has a way of shifting negativity and challenging deficits - it is positive, respectful, and up front. It is a way of working that takes a lot of care and thought and we don't get it right all of the time. The dignifying part of this is that we care enough to keep trying – with all of those we interact with.

While we share a knowledge of violence, we all have different ways of thinking, responding and being in the world – if we can accept this and work alongside each other then we offer dignity to others and ourselves. The relationships that are formed through and alongside WAI are crucial to our success.

Being

The words wellbeing, or ora, hold understandings that can demean those who feel they don't fit within them in our WAI space. Focusing on the concept of wellbeing may then unintentially offer further marginalisation to some collective members. Understanding that this was effecting and confusing us as a collective was a pivotal shift in the model of practice. Hearing that some members felt that they couldn't speak freely about the less positive spaces they may inhabit (because many us of sit in spaces that appear more 'well') was difficult. Our earlier focus on wellbeing was effectively silencing voices within the very space that was intended to ensure they could be heard. An intense and robust discussion around our many layered ways of being offered a space for honest expression of these sentiments and for a much needed shift in the way we speak about and frame these within our kaupapa. The word 'being' has been selected as one that best encompasses what this aspect of the kaupapa means to us at this time. 'Being' for us allows a layered and shifting approach – we can 'be' however we are at any time - confused, sad, angry, active, fierce, calm, enthusiastic, or engaged. There are layers of memory, resistance, oppression, hurt, change, creativity and much more that are then also allowed to exist safely in this space. Working within an understanding of 'being' allows us to be us – and, like any person, we are complex and fluid.

Insider facilitation

The WAI collective approach offers an ethical opportunity for power relations to be considered and addressed. Setting WAI up in this way, as a collective making art together, allows us the best opportunity to share power with each other. A key principle in addressing potential power imbalances at WAI is that of insider facilitation. If everyone within our collective, including the facilitator, has experienced violence then the space becomes safe enough to hold authentic dialogue without fear of condescension, misunderstanding, sympathy, or 'help' from those outside our experiences. Every woman in our collective has felt humiliated, pitied, or 'less' than 'others' at some time because of the negative social responses she has received to her experiences of violence.

Anti-Oppressive, Social Justice, & COLLECTIVE ART MAKING Approach

The WAI collective's Anti-Oppressive approach "compels us to recognise and unlearn the everyday practices, assumptions, approaches, and methods that help maintain the status quo" (Baines, D. 2011, p.71). If our collective aspire to challenge entrenched and unhelpful ways of responding, through a different approach, then we must be very clear about what we are aiming for and what we do not wish to perpetrate. Broad differences between the common social approaches taken with 'victims of violence' can clearly be seen in the table developed by Baines (2011) below. If WAI compare our approach against this table, there are many correlations. It is clear that we aspire to work within an anti-oppressive framework. We are a collective of 'insiders' or 'survivors' (not professionals or outsiders 'working with' survivors), we seek to share power through a mutual process of art making as advocacy for social change, and we are united through the kaupapa and kawa we have developed. Working in this anti-oppressive way upholds the dignity of our members as it challenges traditional and modern models of practice which individualise, pathologise, and 'help victims'.

What has become apparent about this WAI way of working is that the collective make decisions about the art making, the exhibition, the prioritising of resources, the kaupapa and kawa, and the public way we choose to present ourselves, however some of what happens at WAI is not undertaken collectively. The responsibility for budgeting, accessing funding, accessing resources, reporting, media engagement, communication, administration, community relationships and education is undertaken by the facilitator and she may require support and guidance from your agency.

Our art making approach is very deliberately not an art therapy approach – it is an active engagement in art making as self-representation and a social justice response to the violence we have experienced. WAI focus on an active engagement in art making as self-representation - this is a very deliberate approach which challenges the stereotypes and understandings that those outside our experiences and cultures may hold about us. It is a direct response to the negative social responses received by many of those within the WAI collective. Working in this way is our best attempt to address the disconnection between our experiences and the way we are portrayed in literature, art, and the media.

MODEL	*Traditional*	*Modern*	*Anti - Oppressive*
View of power	Power over	Power within	Power with
View of the social order	Hierarchical	Egalitarian	Unjust
Institutional processes	Paternalism	Individualism	Solidarity
Nature of relationship	Pedagogical	Neutral and professionally distant	Mutual and dialogic
Nature of intervention	Corrective; punitive	Counselling and personal support; self-help; information and referral	Advocacy, organizing and political action
Examples	Child welfare, social assistance	Sexual assault centres, Addictions counselling	Grassroots anti-poverty groups

Figure 1 Comparison of Practice Models, Baines, 2011,p.70

If WAI were an art therapy based group then there would be an implicit acceptance that those attending were there for therapy - for the help that someone more 'together' could offer. The art works made would also suffer this perception – they would be just another way to expose, analyse and 'fix' the perceived deficiencies of the maker. This non-therapy, participatory arts based approach is one described through a range of key qualitative arts-based research projects in the field of mental health by Stickley (2012). From this perspective, art is seen as social action, as a political voice, with studios such as ours best described as places to meet and work alongside others who understand. They are places where our creativity is free and valued.

“Flipping Deficits”

The term ‘flipping deficits’ is one that has found its way into our WAI vocabulary, along with a range of other rather wry descriptors that we use together to identify who we are and what we do. We have been known to describe ourselves as ‘having artism’, and to depict the WAI way of working together as the ‘WAI infusion’. This humour disguises some very real and pathologising diagnoses, discourses, approaches, and understandings that have been offered to us outside of the WAI space.

The term flipping deficits is an important one as it describes the way that WAI challenge and respond to the many, many deficit representations and negative social responses made to us, as women who have experienced violence. Key to this term is the critical exposure that it brings to those things that continue to oppress us long after the violence has ended.

If we seek a different response, and to change things, then we must expose and re-dress the oppressive perspectives and practices that inhibit change. In order to flip something onto its back you must know it well enough to approach it carefully, and unfortunately we do, as we are often intimate with many of these very negative understandings. Flipping deficits has become a term that describes a complex practice of analysis, discussion, response through art making, and transformation (not necessarily in that order). It is not easy to expose ideologies which are embedded and seen as common sense, but which conceal layers of ongoing power and control (Hadley, 2013), but we attempt this because we have something to say – we want our voices heard and we want others to benefit.

Self-representation

Despite the action and activism of female artists, and the more open transmission of our stories through art and literature, the attitudes and stereotypes which remain around women who have experienced violence continue to impact on the power we have to represent ourselves. Sharing narratives of violence is an immensely difficult proposition. If we talk to others we run the risk of being misunderstood, misrepresented, shamed, or even blamed for what has happened. The social responses we receive to these disclosures have a profound impact on the way we see and recover ourselves after violence.

Representing ourselves offers us the opportunity to transform the way we are seen and understood by those outside of our experiences, and to reclaim our bodies, our identities, our autonomy, and our dignity. The alternative to self-representation is often silence - because it offers us the autonomy to accept or refuse specific subject positionings inherent in the discourses of violence and representation. Not saying things can be a form of resistance, a way of protecting the safety of the personal experience which we ourselves own, and of refusing to engage in dialogue which continues to repress and marginalise us (Morgan and Coomes, 2001). If those who know abuse and oppression so intimately must take the subject position of silence then violence will continue.

To challenge these prescribed collective identities we must have the opportunity to call them into question and to offer our own alternatives (Dunn, 2005). Our authentic voices self-representing these experiences, our responses to them, and our identities, offer the best opportunity for change.

Practical concerns

Choosing a facilitator

The WAI facilitator will play a key role in liaising between the involved agencies and the collective, and in managing resources, funding and relationships. They will require some important qualities.

Ideal facilitator qualities:

- She is an insider to violence – she have lived it too
- She has a depth and breadth of art experience and/ or professional training
- She has previous experience curating exhibitions and fronting media
- She can facilitate manaakitanga
- She is honest, organised, and relates to a wide range of people
- She has energy, a sense of humour, and diplomacy
- She a good analysis of the violence she experienced
- She can manage an often tight budget across a year, keep receipts and complete funders reports

What is she getting herself into?

Here is a basic outline:

- Facilitation of a three – six hour art session once each week with the WAI collective
- Organisation of resources, activities and outside tutors or studio use
- Ongoing communication with members through Facebook or via text messaging
- Ongoing reflections on the process, relationships and outcomes of your collective
- Working alongside your participating agency, and keeping them up to date with how things are going
- Organising and curating public exhibitions (at least once a year)
- Managing funding (if requested to by the supporting agency), keeping all receipts, and writing reports for funders if required
- Media interactions

How can we find a facilitator?

The first port of call should always be previous clients, or women who have deep understanding of violence from an insider perspective as these are the people who will offer the most integrity to this role. People know people so this may be the best place to start. You may choose to have two facilitators working alongside each other or on alternate weeks.

What can our agency offer to support the WAI facilitator?

Facilitation can involve an awful lot of work, and there are some definite benefits. You may choose to seek funding to support this role but if this is not possible consider offering your facilitator other benefits, such as:

- reasonable access to the WAI studio space and resources outside the collective hours (with negotiation – this will depend a lot on whether the space is shared with others)
- As a collective member she will have the right to make and exhibit work as part of WAI
- Friendship, understanding and belonging, as part of a collective who share a very specific kaupapa, and as part of your wider agency dynamic
- Publicity – ensuring that your facilitator receives media attention for the work she undertakes

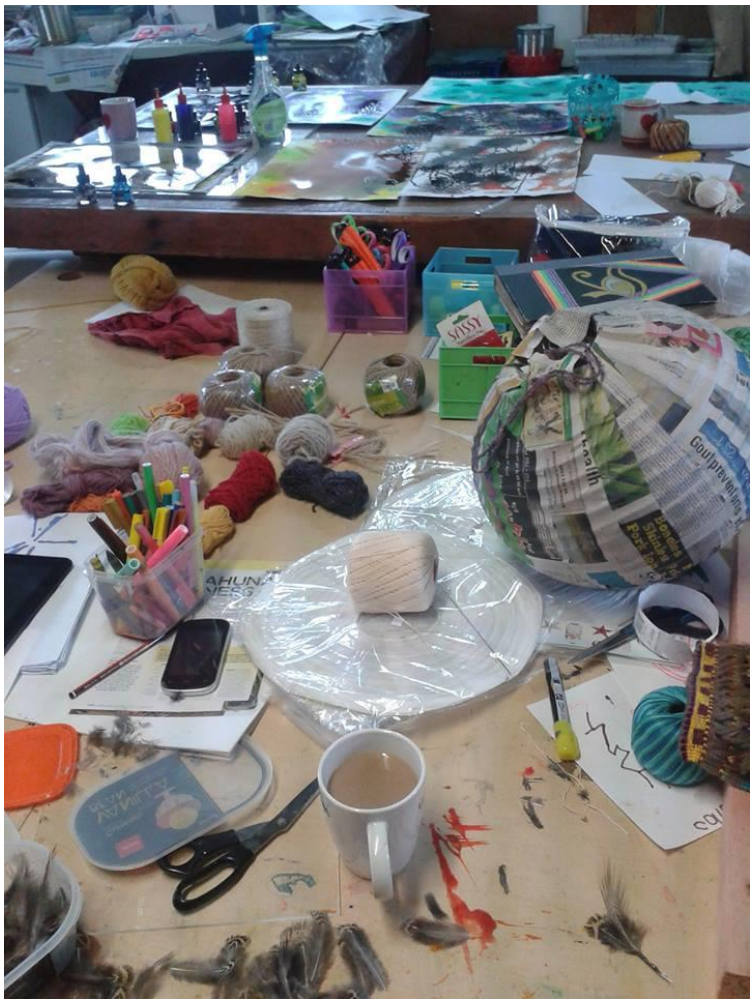
.

Your facilitator may wish to participate in your agency's regular volunteer training, but please know that she is already doing her bit for the agency by facilitating WAI so she should not have to take shifts on the crisis line or rattle buckets – although she may be already doing this, or may be more than happy to participate. Should an opportunity arise for your facilitator to participate in Response Based Practice training then this would be immensely beneficial as WAI is grounded in RBP.

Please take very good care of your facilitator – the chances are that she may be working as a volunteer to do this and that she will be pouring her heart and soul into both the relationships and art-making. It is a big commitment for your facilitator, even if she is being paid, and she will need an ear some days. I will do my best to mentor and assist her also.

Facilitator Training and Mentoring

Your facilitator will be given a handbook very similar to this. It will cover all of the important general information she will need to know – things like knowing when to refer women back for support, how to manage disclosures, curating exhibitions, and maintaining the safety and privacy of members. Ongoing and regular conversations with an advocate, manager or other staff member of your agency with be important in ensuring the integrity of the kaupapa and agency are upheld. Any Response Based Practice Training that is on offer would be immensely beneficial to the WAI collective facilitation.



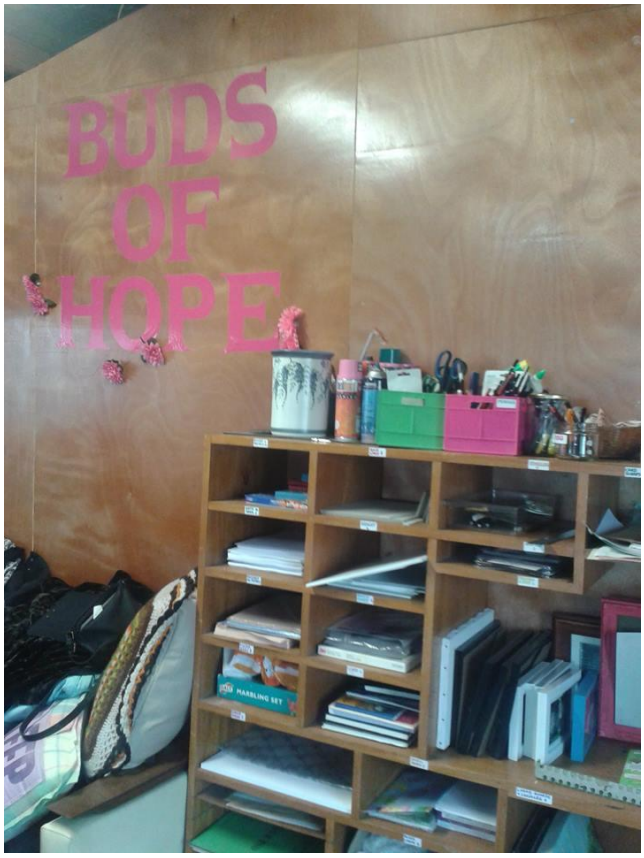
Finding a space

WAI need a space that is safe and that can belong to them alone if this is at all possible. If anyone can walk in on the art-making or chatting then the safety of the space will feel compromised. The women of WAI need to know that they will be the only people seeing their work, until such time as they decide to make it public through the exhibition process.

Offering a designated space can be tricky but is completely worth the effort – it doesn't need to be fancy or even big. WAI PN have previously used an old dental clinic, the back half of the PN Women's Refuge donation shed – an outdoor double garage (which had a concrete floor, a tin roof and no insulation…and was freezing in winter and boiling in summer – but we loved it!), before we finally got our large current studio space. We adore our cramped, imperfect space (leaky windows, wobbly table and all), and everyone who visits comments on the way it feels – the energy is positive and protective. There are 42 collective members in WAI PN, although the most we ever have in is around 15 people at a time and yes it is chaos but we manage.

The space needs:

- Power and a sink with running water (cold is fine)
- Furniture and storage – we have tables, seats, and cupboards which were donated or we have had funding for.
- A kettle, cups and if possible a small fridge for milk – again these may be from donations
- Art resources – a selection of paper, paint, brushes, inks, clay, thread, fabric etc
- Equipment- sewing machine, printmaking equipment etc – this is a bonus not a requirement



Participants will also need access to a toilet (but this doesn't need to be actually in the space).

If the space is handy to your Refuge then that is even better, but anywhere central will do – our first WAI space was a tiny disused dental clinic that a school rented to us for $20 a week (including power), so think creatively and ask your contacts.

Use what comes in as donations, ask around, or put up specific requests onto your Facebook page, or on noticeboards in community libraries, art spaces etc

**If it is impossible to find a private designated space then WAI will need plenty of good lockable storage and the assurance that others will not come into the space unless invited when they are working there.

Funding.

As a guide it costs PN WAI around $5000 a year to run comfortably, although $8000 would allow us to do so many other things that we are keen to try, and $2000 is just manageable if you use lots of recycled materials and don't pay for outside tutors or studio spaces. There are lots of art groups and tutors who will be happy to give their time for nothing, or a small art or food-based koha.

Funding may need to be secured on a yearly basis. WAI is a standalone venture that relies on the supporting agency for advocacy and advice but not necessarily for funding – unless this has been the arrangement. Funders may require the agency to act as an umbrella organisation for any money granted. Support in applying should be given to your facilitator (along with examples of successful applications), and the agency should be involved with this process.

Your agency can hold the WAI funds themselves in a separate account and reimburse the facilitator for purchases, or give her access to this account. The facilitator may also hold the money in a separate account. How this is managed depends on what suits your agency.

Facilitators will be required to keep all receipts, and complete funding reports to those who have donated money, in a timely manner (examples of these will be given). Facilitators are responsible for all funds unless the agency chooses to take this responsibility on themselves.

A list of funding sources is included at the end of this guide.

Resourcing

Basic resources and facilities that are required are listed above (in the section on space).

Any other resources are the facilitators' responsibility as she knows what the collective are trying to achieve and what is required.

Some free sources are listed.

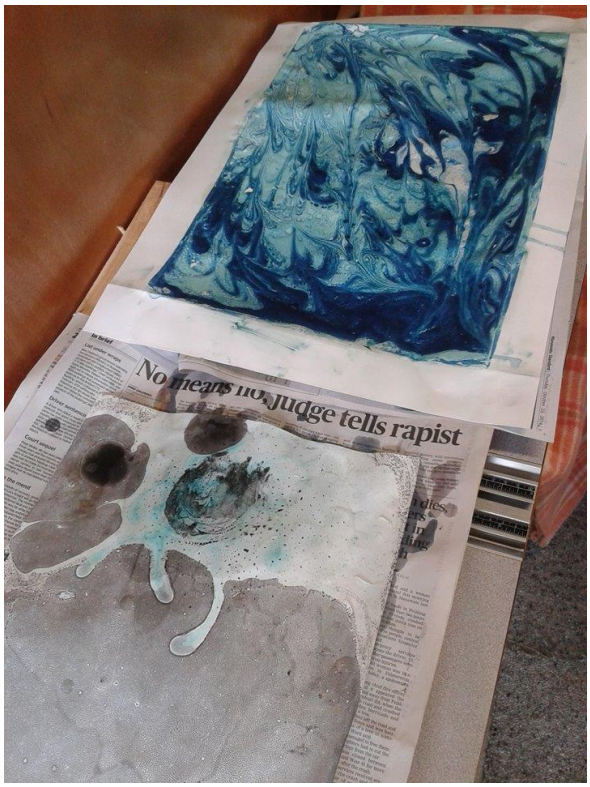
Useful things from agency donations seem to come in all the time. WAI PN take old board games, tatty blankets (to make into cushions), sheets and fabric to sew and print onto, bits and pieces to make jewellery from etc.. Donations may also be perfect for furnishing the WAI studio space.

Criteria for participation in WAI

Your agency will select women to invite to your WAI collective. It is vital that these women have completed, or are currently in, an education programme (or similar), and that they are safe. Information packs and a members' guide to participation will be given. I would suggest that women attend a few times before these documents are given to them – the paperwork side of the collective can be intimidating especially if the context and other participants are also unfamiliar.

WAI PN have found that women may not remain safe during their involvement with WAI. Should women's safety be compromised they will be referred back to your agency for advocacy and advice, but they will not be excluded from WAI, unless there is a real risk to the safety of the collective or individuals within it. Ongoing involvement in WAI may prove a very necessary support should circumstances change in this way.

Ongoing violence



As above, women will be welcome to remain involved in the collective should they experience violence during their involvement with WAI, providing safety is not compromised. In these circumstances it is expected that your agency advocacy and support would increase, and that the WAI facilitator would remain in close contact with you, and the woman herself. Absences from WAI will need to be shared with agency staff.

Agency staff are always welcome in the WAI space, and regular contact with the collective may make this advocacy a more natural part of the space, especially during times of higher need. Staff are welcome to come along and make work with the women also – so visits can be fun!

Packs for counselling and advocacy

All women attending WAI will be given support packs during their first collective hui. The packs will include contact details for support, counselling, and advocacy. These packs will be created with the advice and guidance of each agency. Extra packs will also be available in the space, so they can be taken again if lost, or for women visiting who are interested in participating in WAI.

Comments on others' work

WAI PN cover this with our kawa, but each WAI facilitator will need to set the tone around how comments are given and received, with their own collective. Upholding dignity is key.

Visitors

Agency staff are always welcome in the WAI space.

Agency volunteers are welcome by arrangement with the facilitator.

Outside artists and speakers, or those interested in WAI, may visit by arrangement also. Outside art tutors add an extra element to WAI, as do visits out to specialised studio spaces and galleries. Limiting these ‘outsiders’ to just one or two artists or groups that have a real respect and care for our kaupapa is best. All ‘outsider’ artists and tutors will be required to sign confidentiality forms.

All upcoming visits, times and the purpose of these visits (apart from those by agency staff) need to be clearly communicated to WAI collective members well ahead of the time – at WAI the week before, or via text or Facebook message at least a day ahead. This allows members to opt out: leave, or not come in should they feel uncomfortable.

*It is expected that any visitors to the WAI space are informed and respectful of our kaupapa. PN WAI collective members become quite defensive if visitors see them as participating in art as therapy, or want to ‘help’ them - WAI are a collective of art-makers not a therapy based group.

The facilitator will ensure WAI visitors are kept to a minimum.

Attendance and membership

WAI operates once weekly in Palmerston North. Previously we have worked on two days a week, but I found this a really big commitment and would not recommend it.

Session lengths and the day of the week will be up to you and your facilitator. As a general guide 3 hours per session, per week, is long enough for new collectives starting the year. They can achieve a lot in this time, clean up and then hopefully have some head space before they collect children from daycare, kindy, or school, or head back to other activities. Starting out in a group which is about self-representing our narratives of violence can be tiring, until we know how this will work for us. Getting to know others and developing relationships also requires energy.

This is the time to go slow with the talking and ensure the wairua of the space develops through active art-making.

Once the collective starts to feel established and connected then the length of the sessions may be extended up to six hours. Longer sessions are really useful towards the end of the year when exhibition work starts being prepared.

Women may attend for as often and as long as they choose to. They have no obligation to attend. Life is busy and sometimes we don't feel like going anywhere, or sometimes women only want to call in for a cuppa and a chat, and don't choose to make work. I have become used to enjoying whoever turns up, however they turn up, and supporting whatever they feel like doing. As we work autonomously women can be doing different things at different times anyway, and once women have learnt skills they are usually happy to share these with those who were not there on that day – this is how the collective spirit develops. This may feel a bit chaotic but autonomy and the collective spirit are crucial to WAIs' success.

WAI is not a 'class' with a 'teacher', but a collective with a facilitator who is also a collective member (which means she will be making work too – as often as she can manage it).

Becoming a WAI collective member is not just a one year long privilege. As a collective our members can remain and continue to participate for as long as they like. WAI PN have almost all of our founding members still, although one or two have moved cities or no longer feel the need to come each week.

This ongoing membership can be problematic when resourcing. WAI PN have prioritised the resourcing of new members each year. A hui was held to discuss how we would ensure that new members have the same opportunities that existing members have had. WAI PN volunteered to bring their own resources, come for a shorter period each week or make more work at home and meet less often so that new members could enjoy the same benefits. To date we have not had to implement these suggestions as we have been able to manage funding carefully so all members can continue to fully participate.

Transport

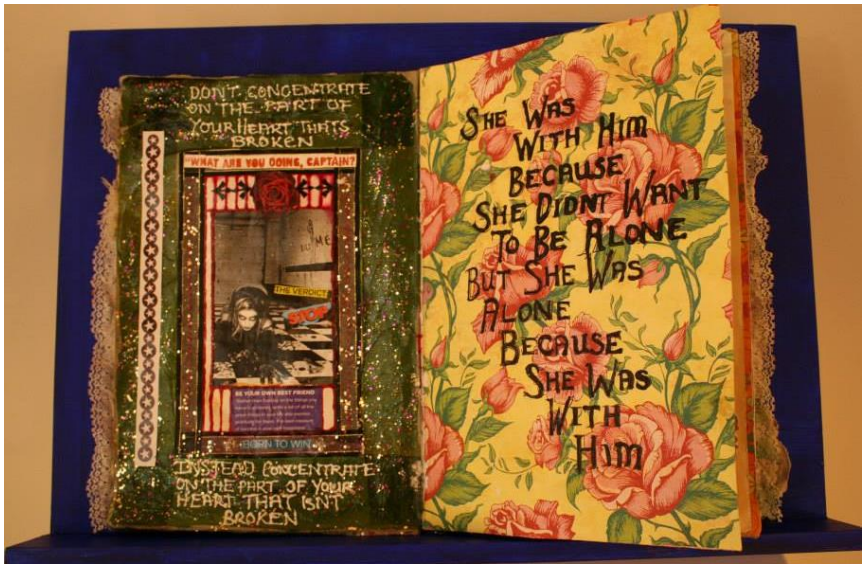
It may be necessary to offer transport to make WAI accessible to those who wish to participate.

WAI PN have managed transport in different ways. In our first year we paid a koha to our local ‘Street Van’ to pick up and drop off women to the weekly session. Since then women have largely made their own way to WAI, as we are now much closer to the central bus depot.

WAI PN do use the Palmerston North Women’s Refuge Van for transport on occasion, or we carpool when we head out of Palmerston North to work in a printmaking studio in Feilding (20 minutes away) or a pottery studio in Marton (40 minutes away). When we are financially able to we offer a koha to Refuge for this. We also hired a van for the day we came down to Wellington for the Domestic Violence Protest March in September 2014 – an expensive option but it meant we could all participate (masked for anonymity), and could visit galleries on the way back home – something which we all really enjoyed doing together.

I have also made the commitment to pick up and drop women from the Safe House when we have participants living there, as it is a long way from our studio, and sometimes just too tiring for women to organise themselves. You may not wish to do this – staff may be back and forwards far more often and may be able to help with transport. Women may also be happy to help each other out, once they trust each other.

The art-making approach



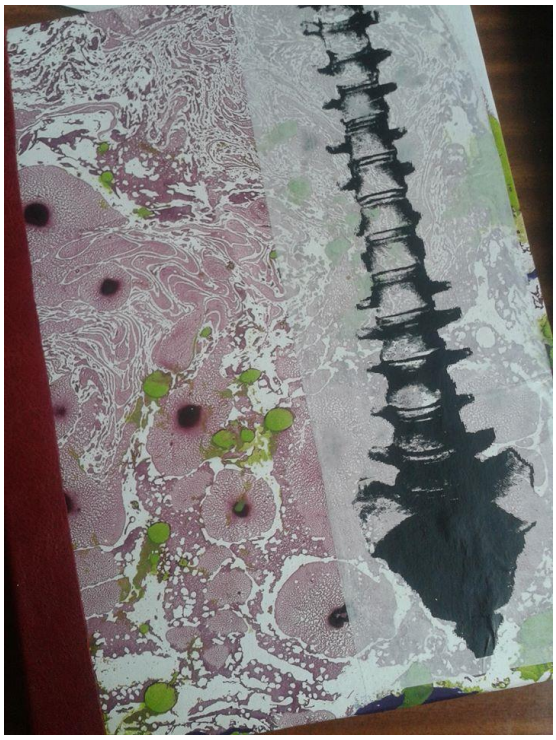
This is the responsibility of the facilitator, but they should offer your agency a few insights now and then to help you understand what is going on in your WAI collective.

What is made is totally up to your collective and the skills your facilitator can bring to this process – please use your contacts and the skills that sit within the collective also eg: at WAI PN one of our members is a prolific paper pulp artist and she has loved sharing her passion and skills with the rest of the collective.

Making art is what WAI is about. The kaupapa will be made clear at the time women are invited to participate, so we all know why we are there. Talking is not the purpose of this collective – merely a positive spin-off once people get to know and trust each other.

WAI is a making space, so it is vital that art making takes priority.

Starting the year

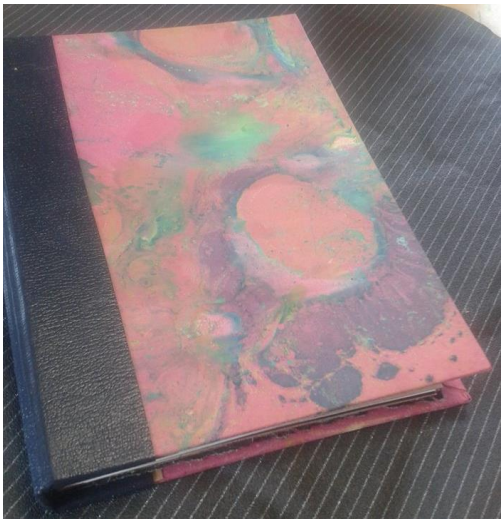


The art making around our experiences will come out as we feel safe to share it. It is vital that this is allowed to be expressed however women wish to represent it. For a start you may find that some women want to make work that appears to be not about their experiences at all, or they may want to create work that is strident and angry. The WAI kaupapa is about us – not our perpetrators. We are not usually the violent ones, although we may still be quite angry!

Every piece of work we make has us in it somehow, even if others can't see this.

I suggest that the first few art making experiences are non-threatening. WAI PN make books at the start of every year. In this way we learn new skills and create a private space that is ours for the year – which is really important as an individual within a collective. Moving into a more conceptual space takes time and safety, but it seems to occur quite easily within WAI, if we start out slowly.

There are lots of different techniques for making books – and some great videos on You Tube. I am happy to meet with you as part of our new collective set up process to show you a couple of the ways that WAI PN have found to make books easily, and can share our contacts for the specific resources you may need. Book making has proven such a popular skill that many women in our collective just keep making them all year, and several of us rely heavily on drawing and thinking through these visual diaries. They are also a great place to record technical procedures for later reference.



Our first art making (the ice-breaker) is usually the inking or marbling of our book covers – something that is lots of fun and immediately engages women in conversation with each other, as they discuss colours and how they have achieved various effects.

The rest of the year

The first WAI year is a good time to share whatever skills the collective have or would like to learn. It might be good to have a few ideas to go on with in the first few weeks of every year. WAI PN have used our first part of each year (after our bookmaking) to work using printmaking as this is a great way to ensure results that look like 'real' art – no matter what level of skill the collective have. It is necessary to work together to create and lift prints – this allows women to engage with each other and the kaupapa quite naturally.

In 2013 we printed tea towels which we exhibited at our city library. In 2014 we created printed blanket cushions which we also exhibited at several of the city libraries in Palmerston North. Both exhibitions were simple and easy to install – hanging tea towels and putting cushions on chairs! Going straight into a smaller exhibition early each year has worked well for us as it has taken the scary prospect of exhibition and thrown us into this in a smaller, less intimidating, way. Both exhibitions have been on at the same time as annual appeal for Women's Refuge – July each year, which ensures relevance and offers a way in to venues.

WAI PN have found that having time to learn new skills, and to play with these is really important. We have enjoyed playing with the boundaries of 'good art' also. For example: poor quality prints (ink too thick, uneven printing etc) have been seen as reflective of how we are seen as women who have experienced violence – worthless, broken etc. One of our collective members screwed up her 'bad'

print, then wet it inked it and carefully recreated it, spreading it out and gluing the pieces back together. It became the first print in a series which showed her growth in strength and understanding, as each print became clearer, of better quality, and more empowered (see the Bambi prints below).

Playing and having fun have been a huge part of our process of discovery and creation.

While autonomy is crucial to WAI having boundaries or guidelines around our final artworks has become important also. Many women have found the looseness of complete freedom intimidating and feel unsure of the expectations. Talking about general ideas often leads to specific things that WAI can work on autonomously yet still together: eg: WAI PN created a paper cutting wall for our 2015 exhibition. The guidelines were that the works be white, framed (size, colour and quantity of frames are up to the individual within a 1.5 metre square each) and that there will be some flowers in there somewhere to tie to our show title *Bloom*. Ideas around printing white ink on white paper using letterpress text were offered, and examples of good quality paper cutting shown, but each woman had her own unique kaupapa that she brought to the creation of her works.

Regular hui about what the collective want to try and ideas for the end of the year will develop naturally. Women work autonomously at WAI, within reason. This is important (if chaotic) as it allows us to choose how we want to do things – it may just be autonomy within a process (etching instead of using letterpress) or it may mean 10 people working on different things within the studio space! Themes seem to develop naturally and people bounce off each other's' ideas, techniques, and media use.

Enjoy the chaos!

Exhibition

Again, this is your facilitator's responsibility, but she may need help from agency staff to move, label and hang / take down work.

Why does Exhibiting work matter?

Presenting the WAI collectives' art work professionally in a public venue ensures that we have a forum for our experiences and offers the best possible chance for this self-representation to privilege and validate our voices and our artwork; offering education, challenging misconception and misrepresentation, and opening a space for others to tell their own stories.

For many women the exhibition is a huge deal – putting out not only their art work but their personal experience is incredibly daunting, but can be really empowering. Seeing our narratives respected through professional presentation is really important – it makes what we are saying important and credible.

For WAI PN exhibition is often an emotional time – we feel pride, fear, and connection to 'others', and we see the impact our narratives have on our families and our viewers.

Please offer your collective extra support at this time.

Media

It is important women know that work shown through the exhibition process will be seen by the public (who may include previous partners). It may also be reproduced visually in the media. Women can use a pseudonym or remain anonymous on their titles. Self-portraits are not recommended, except under consultation with the agency.

Positive publicity is great for your agency and the WAI collective – if it is accurate. I am extremely controlling with media and always assert our kaupapa both verbally and in writing – the last thing WAI need when they have worked as makers all year is to be portrayed as 'victims' or 'survivors' of violence who are 'doing art as therapy' to make themselves feel better! We are art makers self-representing our experiences. I prefer the term 'women who have experienced violence' to 'victim' or 'survivor', although as these are commonly understood terms I do use them (always in inverted commas). Violence is only part of our wider experience and identity, not the sum total of who we are. Our art work privileges our authentic experience over the stereotypes and myths that marginalise and discriminate against us.

You and your facilitator may wish to prepare a written statement about your WAI collective and their exhibition work which can be given to media representatives. That way we are all on the same page.

The way those outside our experience portray us is a huge reason for us speaking for ourselves. The last thing we want is for publicity to place us neatly back in the boxes that we are deconstructing through the WAI collective process.

Communication

Clear and regular communication is key to holding the collective together. Our two main forms of communication are text message and a shared secret Facebook page. Communication between the different facilitators, and between the agency and their facilitators may be less frequent and probably achieved through visits, phone calls, emails, or hui.

Cellphone

WAI PN all have my cell phone number and I have each of theirs. The women choose who else in the collective that they want to have their phone numbers – if anyone – and arrange this themselves. They are asked not to share these numbers with anyone outside of the group unless they are given permission to do so.

Every Sunday night I text the times the studio is open, and the resources available to the collective on the Monday. Sometimes this is a reminder that we are going to work elsewhere and of the time we will leave and return. Collective members can also text to remind me if they needed specific equipment, a ride, or won't be coming.

WAI online

Photos of collective members may not be taken or posted anywhere online.

Our PN WAI secret Facebook page is a busy place, with members posting constantly – not just art related things but motivational quotes, exhibition openings, or things that they think other members may appreciate. It has become a great way for us to remain in contact and develop our relationships outside of our kanohi ki kanohi (face to face) time.

Your WAI collective can set up their own secret group on Facebook, with you, or an agency staff member as their administrator. It will be a page that only the administrator can invite people to join. Managers or an allocated staff member are encouraged to participate so that they can keep an eye on the content, and join in the inspiration also. This is a great place to add art techniques and videos of how to do things from YouTube, or images of inspiring works similar to what we are trying to achieve in our mahi.

Our public Facebook page is a great place to share our public work, and our studio process work. The WAI public Facebook page is a community page which will be for ALL of our WAI Facilitators to add their collectives' work to. Facilitators will be added as administrators to this WAI Aotearoa wider collective page. This is not a page for other collective members to add to as it is a public space.

Down the track I am keen to develop a 'WAI online' art-making collective – to allow women who cannot (or are unwilling) to participate in the kanohi ki kanohi model to make art and be part of a community of makers who have all experienced violence, from home. It would be great to have these online communities attached to agencies, facilitators, and working WAI collectives, so that they can be included in the Facebook pages and, if they want to, their work can still be shown in exhibitions. Developing these relationships may open the door for women to step into the kanohi ki kanohi model down the track.

Children

While children are always welcome at the PN WAI collective, they are not encouraged. Often WAI is the only space women have where they can focus on themselves and their art-making, and this is difficult if they are worried about children touching things or are bothered by their noise and movement.

Safety is also a concern when children are in the studio space. WAI PN have kerosene, toxic printmaking gels, turps, and broken plates, mirrors and glass.

I have developed a relationship with a church run childcare in Palmerston North. This centre supports women with advice and practical help filling in forms and dealing with WINZ, so that children can be somewhere safe while their parent / caregiver is at WAI. This works wells for some women.

WAI PN have managed children in the studio through our kawa, and by setting up a children's art / play area so that we can contain their movements and their making and ensure they are not using our good materials and paper accidentally. In our collective children are welcome as long as their parent/caregiver actively supervises them – which usually means that this person gets no making done themselves. Some days women are happy to just come for a chat and a coffee when they have their kids with them. If school holidays make this difficult then the WAI studio can close over this time, or it could take a different approach and focus entirely on a shorter art sessions that are for the children more than the adults. We are keen to encourage art across all ages, however the focus and the funding for WAI is the women involved.

What do we need to do as the agency supporting a WAI collective?

A Summary

This makes it sound simple and hopefully it will be, but if it isn't then please make contact with me. As the overall facilitator I am responsible to mentor and guide everyone in this process – we are all learning as we go, so glitches are expected!

- Commit to WAI carefully
- Help find a suitable studio space
- Help find furniture and resource donations
- Access, or support your facilitator to access funding as required
- Keep an open and ongoing line of communication with your facilitator, sharing relevant information as required
- Monitor the budget
- Remember to read and re-read this guide – it is intended to help with this WAI set up and running (please scribble in notes and add things so we can make this model work for everyone)

Please stay in touch. It matters to me that supporting this WAI collective is positive and beneficial for everyone involved. It should be something that energises and nurtures your agency and staff too. Hopefully any effort required to support your collective will be returned ten-fold in positive energy, friendship, and amazing artwork.

Again – thank you for what you are about to undertake and may the journey be worth it.

WAI Overall Facilitator and Researcher Information

Karen Seccombe

(previously McIntyre)

(MMVA, BFA, BEd)

My role in WAI is that of both founder and overall facilitator. I also facilitate the WAI Palmerston North collective.

WAI started as a direct response to the 13 years of violence that I experienced, and to my ongoing discomfort around how I am portrayed because of this experience. Art-making has been a crucial way of self-representing this.

WAI was developed as part of my Master of Maori Visual Arts degree, through Te Putahi-a-Toi, Massey University. It continues as part of my PhD research, supervised by artist and Massey Professor Bob Jahnke, and Dr. Margaret Forster. From 2018 when this research is complete WAI will function as a stand-alone venture.

The WAI collective approach to art-making, as women who have experienced violence, challenges conventions which silence women, and which view ‘community art’ as somehow less than that of the individual ‘artist as genius’.

Arts funding and useful contacts

Funding

www.the**arts**.co.**nz**/boosted

BOOSTED is a crowd funding website suitable for one off funding for specific projects, with a lower limit – they suggest around $500. WAI PN have used BOOSTED to fund a $300 pottery wheel. This site largely relies on your network and contacts to donate to the project. The fundraiser (you) has control of the content of the page and is well supported by the BOOSTED facilitators.

http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/find-funding/funds/arts-grant

http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/find-funding/funds/creative-communities-scheme

Creative New Zealand are the largest arts project funder in New Zealand. There are a range of funding opportunities available – check the criteria and amount funded carefully as successful application to one of these schemes usually means you can't apply to another.

http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/

Local authorities manage the Creative Communities Scheme and may also know of other funding opportunities in your area.

http://www.mch.govt.nz/funding-nz-culture/search-funding

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage fund offer a search function that allows the user to put in their criteria (what the money is for, group/ individual, the region etc..). Offering a wide range of local grants this is an option worth spending some time investigating.

https://www.perpetualguardian.co.nz/philanthropy/applying-for-funding

Also offers a range of funding opportunities to registered charitable organisations – so this would need to be completed by the Refuge, not the WAI facilitator

http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/Funding-and-grants---Lottery-grants---Lottery-Community

http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/Funding-and-grants---Trust-and-fellowship-grants

Regional grants available

http://generosity.org.nz/

This site requires payment

http://grants.nzct.org.nz/

This site requires the creation of a user profile

There are many places to find funding – keep an eye out for one-off or less frequent funding opportunities or funding for designated projects. It is easy to pitch what you want to do with WAI to utilise the criteria offered – eg: dependent on the criteria you may need to request funding for a one-off exhibition within a specific timeframe, or the criteria may require your WAI collective to collaborate with another community or arts organisation, or have a specific outcome such as an installation. Your facilitator you will hopefully understand the art-speak and be able to access funding accordingly.

The other thing to remember is that the collective can make money themselves. WAI PN have been printing and making cushions from old donated woolen blankets. While it didn't make us our fortune we also didn't promote it much, or hit the markets or shops. There may be an opportunity for your collective to maintain a section in a shop, café or outlet supplying an arts product that they develop and enjoy making.

As a wider collective these opportunities will be explored also.

Resources

www.ordermax.co.nz/**Art-Supplies**

www.warehousestationery.co.nz/**art**

www.gordonharris.co.nz/

www.impressionsnelson.co.nz/fine-**art-supplies**.htm

www.encaustic**art**.co.nz

https://www.tanjis.co.nz/

www.**montmarte**.net/stockist

artpaper@ihug.co.nz
Randal (the owner) supplies a wide range good quality paper for all art processes and book card

WAI PN also use Spotlight, Uncle Bills (good cheap paint, brushes, sponges, plaster bandage, gold foil, pins, needles…the list is endless), Mitre 10 and Bunnings (for wood, spray paint, plaster, black plastic, tools etc..) and buy cheap frames for exhibition from The Warehouse or garage sales (we usually have to re-glue these, and often spray paint them to a colour we like), and order our clay online (there are several suppliers depending on the type of clay required).

Free suppliers – it helps to make friends with people in your community

- Menzshed assist with community woodworking projects
- You could place an ad for the resources you need at your local library (WAI PN were given a sewing machine this way)
- Ask larger suppliers if they will discount or if they have any out of date stock you could have
- Paint stores may have mis-tints they will donate
- Looks for ‘arts recycling’stores
- Your local recycling centre
- Businesses that have excess polystyrene, broken glass and tiles, packaging and paper
- Tradespeople often have bits of wood, off cuts, old tools etc that they may donate
- Op shops – great places for fabrics, frames, jars, old music – the Salvation Army are the cheapest here in Palmerston North, shop around for the best prices

Art Spaces

Here are just a few spaces and contacts in the Wellington and Blenheim regions. You will have many more of your own contacts.

http://artsaccess.org.nz/wellington-creative-spaces-network

This network includes creative spaces in the Greater Wellington region and meets every six weeks to share resources, information and ideas. Members include Mix and Arts on High (Lower Hutt); Vincents Art Workshop, Pablos Art Studios and Alpha Art Studios (Wellington city); and King Street Artworks (Masterton). Arts Access Aotearoa co-ordinates the network. If you are interested in finding more about this network, contact Claire Noble at Arts Access Aotearoa T: 04 802 4349 or Email:claire.noble@artsaccess.org.nz

http://www.artistsalliance.org.nz/html/artist_spaces.php

Working for visual artists – careers, networks, advocacy – offers links to many other sites

http://www.tlc.ac.nz/

Learning Institution in the Wellington region – could be worth contacting re: one-off special classes in a specific media (eg: metal), or to enquire about using their facilities out of hours. Their tutors may also be interested in coming into the WAI space to work with women around a specific topic or media.

www.marlborough**artsociety**.com

May have tutors for one off visits, or be able to offer gallery space for exhibitions

204 High Street
P.O.Box 1136
Blenheim
Marlborough

Telephone : 03 577 6784

Email : info@marlboroughartsociety.com

Important Readings

These are attached at the end of this document. Please take the time to read them and ask any questions you have. These readings explain the underpinnings of WAI, so are good to understand well, especially as you will probably be asked to explain the kaupapa sometimes.

WAI kai

Kai is an important part of WAI. We like food that tastes good and happily some of it is even healthy! We hope to share your collectives' recipes as you develop them.

On shorter sessions we share morning tea, but on full days lunch is provided and should be included in your budget. Tea, coffee, milk etc are always available. I enjoy cooking for WAI PN, but you may prefer to buy in kai instead. The way you bring in manaakitanga through your kai will be unique to your initiative. A spirit of generosity sits in the WAI kai space.

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